

BRITISH BIRDS
FOR
CAGES, AVIARIES
AND EXHIBITION

J. Hand Addison

Deaford Park,

Sur

Bucks

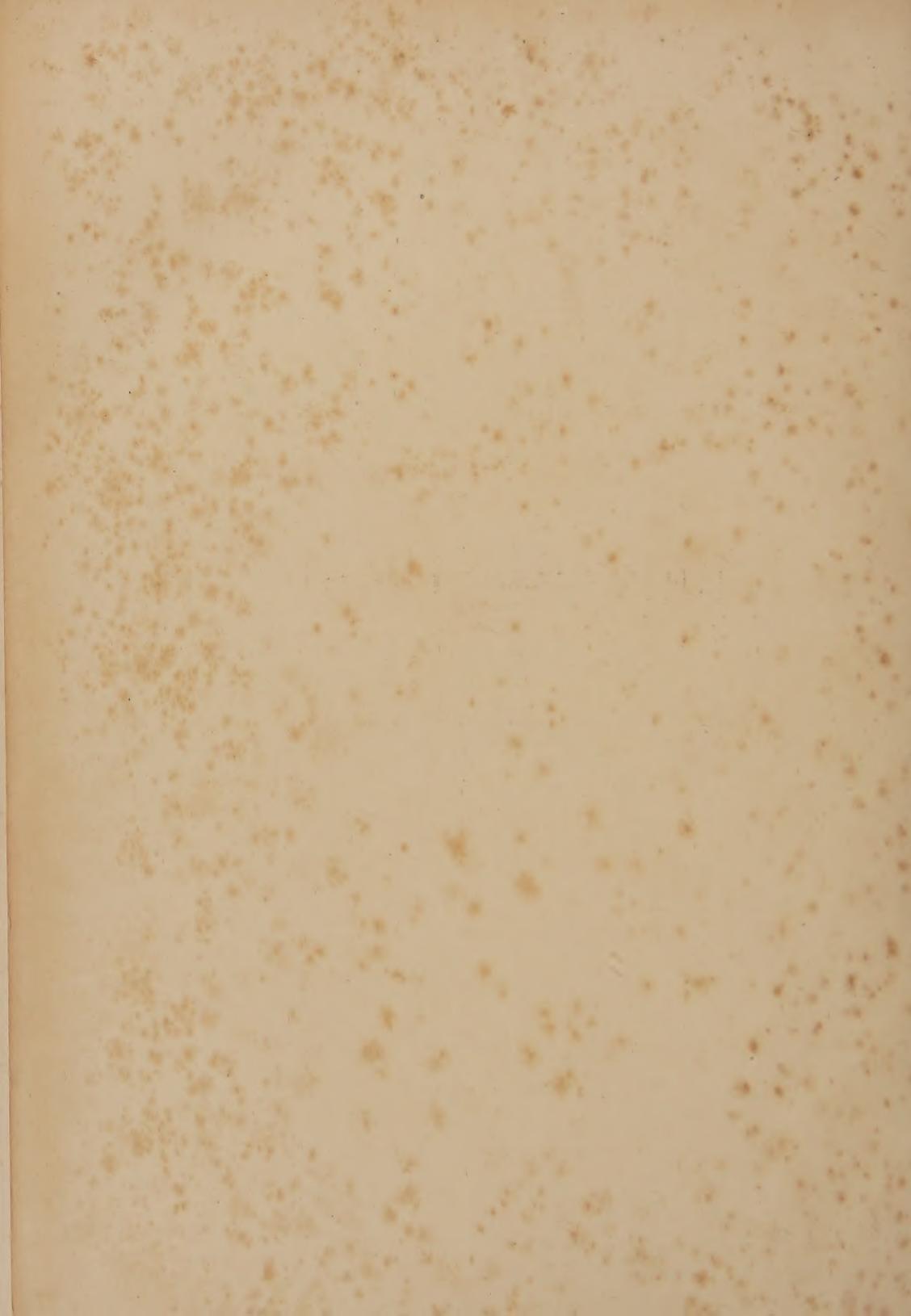


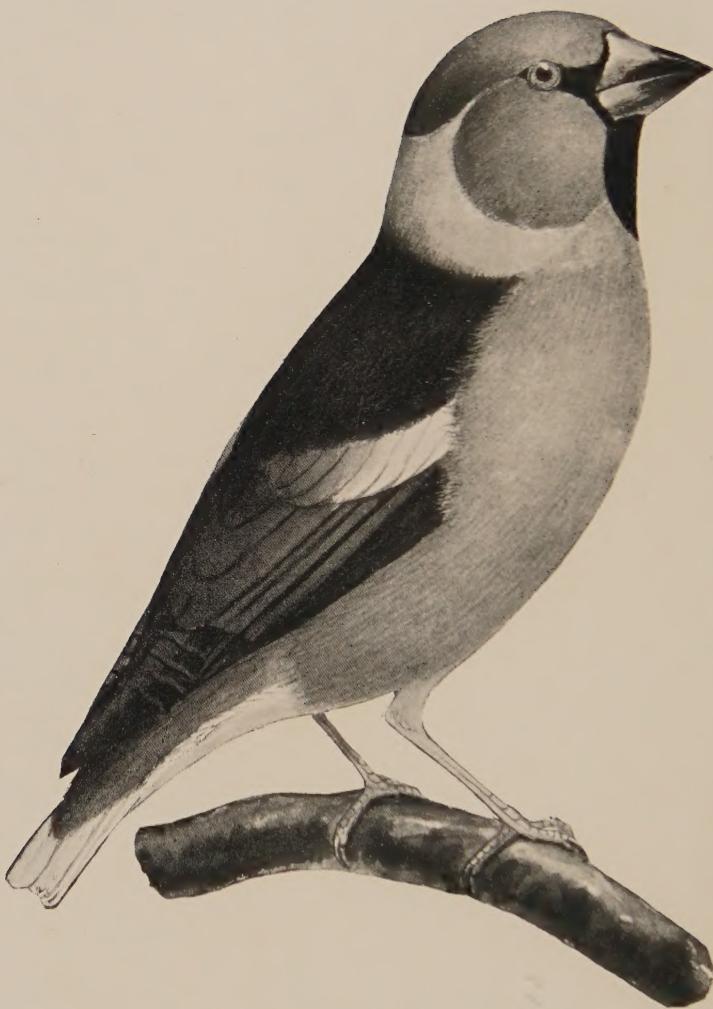


BRITISH BIRDS

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Cages, Aviaries, and Exhibition





HAWFINCH (MIDLAND CHIEF).

The property of Mr. H. J. Chick, Nottingham.

BRITISH BIRDS

FOR

Cages, Aviaries, and Exhibition

BY

SUMNER W. BIRCHLEY,

N.B.B. & M.C., L.P.O.S., &c., &c.

VOL. I.

LONDON
SHERRATT & HUGHES
Manchester: 34 Cross Street
1909.

I dedicate this work to my
dear Father and Mother.

PREFACE

THE various excellent works that have been published from time to time, on the general treatment of British Birds in captivity, from various points of view have no doubt been most helpful to all who love and study these beautiful forms of life.

I have been a most interested party in this direction all my life, and at the present time I am quite unable to feel comfortable, or to feel that my life is complete without having them around me.

No doubt the professional British Bird keeper will find little advantage, but to the amateur and beginner this work should be of great service.

At the moment, I am sorry to say that very few of the hundreds of fanciers that keep British Birds do not study them in their wild state, which I consider is *most necessary* for their general well-being in caged life, and to this end I have included in this work much information relating to this, not only necessary knowledge, but as a most fascinating study both in Winter and Summer.

How many are there that know the haunts and habitations of their pets when free? Very few, I am afraid, and I base this statement not on mere contemplation but from information I have gained when in conversation with fanciers themselves, who although in many cases have been prominent men in the "Fancy,"

yet have admitted their lack of knowledge from these important standpoints, and have intimated to me their intention to acquire this information.

It is only after long experience and most careful observation, both in the caged and wild state, that I have been able to write this work with the confidence that I have done, and to know that the information given herein is reliable and easily practicable. I have endeavoured to place the work under different headings, relating to each variety dealt with, so that the reader may, on turning to the species of bird on which he requires information, see at a glance under which of these headings the detail he requires is to be found.

Description of Parent Birds.

Under this heading I have endeavoured to make plain the particular details relating to the various species of birds, so that the amateur may be able to not only satisfy himself as to the species before him, but also the sex of the bird. This should prove most useful, as from my own experience, the various bird catchers are not particular in deceiving their customer if they think they can do so. These descriptions should also help to discriminate a bird in its wild state and also in the cage.

Attractive Qualities.

Under this heading is dealt the various good qualities that would cause the reader to obtain or keep the bird under observation.

Habitation.

Under this heading is found the most likely places in which to find the birds under consideration.

Catching.

I here endeavour to give the most simple and practical way to snare the various species as may be required.

Steadying and Meteing off.

Here you have the information of what I have found the most practical way of meteing off the various birds from wild state to cage life.

Hand Rearing.

From practice I have found the information I have written on this subject most successful.

Exhibiting.

This I have dealt with, and also recommended the most suitable cages, to successfully show the birds to their best advantage.

Food.

Under this heading I think I have done justice to the larder of the various species under observation.

Nest and Eggs. Where, when, and how to find them. Here you have full details of the breeding of the birds under review fully described.

Countryside Notes. As previously stated, I have dealt with these for the express purpose of endeavouring to encourage all Fanciers to study the general life of the

birds in their wild state. The information given is for the greater part elementary, so as not to encumber the mind with technical points before the more simple knowledge is attained. By taking any of the birds on which these subjects are written, and following out the information given, an early interest in their domestic life is sure to follow.

General Diseases and Ailments.

These and their treatment are dealt with in detail, as most birds in captivity are subject to one or another of the various derangements that are common amongst them, and no case should be neglected, but instantly attended to.

Broadly speaking, I think I have mentioned and dealt with every British bird that is suitable to be kept in a cage, and in conclusion I trust it may be as useful to the readers as it has been my intention to make it.

Cages, Aviaries, and Bird Room Utensils. These have been carefully considered, and sectional plans shown wherever necessary, which should make their construction fairly easy.

For valuable assistance given in the obtaining of the photographs and drawings of the well known winners depicted in this work, I have to thank gratefully Messrs. Maxwell of London, Howe of Wellingborough, and Chick of Nottingham, together with other enthusiasts throughout the country.

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

THERE is no question of all the many wondrous things that are wrought by the hand of Almighty God to inhabit the earth, there is none that can be compared with the beautiful bird life, all the world over. And yet, though they are in many instances, such small bits of life, all their wants are administered, be they in whatever clime they will.

It matters not where you tarry in the open air, whether in the town or the country, you have them around you, if only the chirping Sparrow, or the screaming Starling on the gable, always exhibiting both grace and form, and often with most surpassing plumage, they are, without doubt, one of God's best gifts to man.

Every individual, whether man, woman, or child, if worthy of such a name, loves the birds, and looks upon them as a reassuring gift, although they do not know whether they will have food for the morrow, it will be supplied by their Great Creator, for they live a most busy life, day in, day out, and it would be better for everyone, if mankind carried out his work and duties, with as much zeal and energy, as do the birds of our Countryside. Mary Howitt says :

“ How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Flitting about from tree to tree.”

Introduction

In these lines I do not think she suggests that the birds are idle, but would, I think, be more likely to mean that they do not tire of the monotony of their lives, as often do men of their pleasures and duties.

Let us then at all times look upon the birds as evidences of a wondrous and considerate Father. I am not ~~one~~ to suggest that you do any bird a kindness, by depriving him of his liberty, and the general free access to the whole of this beautiful world, and very many times have I been pulled up on this subject, when speaking of the caging of the various species that are common to us in our country lanes and fields, but I take it that birds, beast, and flowers were sent for the use and joy of man. The cow, horse, cat, and dog were all wild at one time, likewise our charming little bird, the Canary, but all these were, by the civilisation of mankind, brought to domestication, and they all seem to appreciate the kindness and consideration meted out to them.

I am perfectly convinced, that, at the moment we are not breeding British Birds, generally, as is the case with all other animals and birds that have been so treated, and are to-day looked upon as a necessity, and even a joy to mankind. But dear reader, this will come at an early date, and why shouldn't it. I personally fail to see why there shouldn't be strains of Nightingales, Linnets, Goldfinches, etc., just the same as Canaries and Pigeons. I am not conceited enough to suggest that my work is perfect, but I do say this, that the information given herein is from an experience of some

twenty-five years, not altogether from a caged point of view, but a wild one.

I believe I can truthfully say, that there is not half a dozen recognised British Cage Birds, that I have not, at one time or another, successfully kept and exhibited, and these, as you will see, I have not left out the most difficult ones to keep, for I think there is no question that such birds as the Goldcrest, Tree-creeper, Wryneck, Black Redstart, Swallow, and Martin, Greater and Lesser, Spotted Woodpeckers, Hoopoe, Golden Oriel, Great, Grey, and Woodchat Shrikes, are without doubt, the most difficult to successfully cater for, notwithstanding this, I have kept them all in perfect health.

It now remains for us to turn our hands to breed these birds at home. I am sure it can be done if proper accommodation and feeding is given, and the result will be greatly beneficial, for not only shall we have domesticated birds, in all their wondrous beauty and song, but it will be the means of saving the Country of being robbed of its bird life, year by year, for caging purposes.

Introduction

ORDERS TO WHICH THE 72 BIRDS HEREIN DEALT WITH
BELONG.*Order Passeres.*

Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis elegans</i>
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula europaea</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Greenfinch	<i>Ligurinus chloris</i>
Bramblefinch	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>
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Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>

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Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
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Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla lugubris</i>
Blue-headed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Shorelark	<i>Otocorys alpestris</i>
Woodlark	<i>Alauda arborea</i>
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
House Martin	<i>Chelidon urbica</i>
Sand Martin	<i>Cotile riparia</i>
Tree Creeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Redbacked Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Woodchat Shrike	<i>Lanius pomeranus</i>
Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>

Song Thrush	<i>Turdus musicus</i>
Missel Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>
Magpie	<i>Pica rustica</i>
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
Golden Oriel	<i>Oriolus galbula</i>
Waxwing	<i>Ampelis garrulus</i>

Order Picariæ.

Wryneck	<i>Lynx torquilla</i>
Greater Spotted Wood-pecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Lesser Spotted Wood-pecker	<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>
Green Woodpecker	<i>Gecinus viridis</i>

WHERE OUR SUMMER MIGRANTS SPEND THE WINTER.

1. Ring Ouzel	Northern Africa and Asia Minor
2. Wheatear	Northern Africa to Persia, and Northern India
3. Chiff Chaff	Shores of the Mediterranean

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4. Yellow Wagtail	Africa
5. Sand Martin	India and Africa
6. Swallow	Ethiopia and India
7. House Martin	South of Abyssinia
8. Redstart	Northern Africa
9. Whinchat	Northern Africa
10. Blackcap	Northern Africa and South- ern Europe
11. Nightingale	Africa
12. Wryneck	China and Northern Africa
13. Tree Pipit	Africa, Persia and India
14. Lesser Whitethroat	Southern Africa
15. Greater Whitethroat	Southern Africa
16. Willow Wren	Africa and Persia
17. Red-backed Shrike	Africa and Persia
18. Sedge Warbler	Northern Africa and Asia Minor
19. Garden Warbler	Africa
20. Reed Warbler	Africa
21. Wood Warbler	Africa
22. Spotted Flycatcher	Africa
23. Pied Flycatcher	Africa
24. Woodchat Shrike	Africa
25. Stonechat	Africa

LIST OF SUMMER MIGRANTS TO THE BRITISH ISLES DEALT WITH IN THIS WORK.

1. Ring Ouzel	March and April
2. Wheatear	March

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3. Chiff Chaff	March
4. Yellow Wagtail	March and April
5. Sand Martin	April
6. Swallow	April
7. House Martin	April
8. Redstart	April
9. Whinchat	April and May
10. Blackcap	April
11. Nightingale	April
12. Wryneck	April
13. Tree Pipit	April
14. Lesser Whitethroat	April
15. Greater Whitethroat	April
16. Willow Wren	March and April
17. Red-back Shrike	April and May
18. Sedge Warbler	April
19. Garden Warbler	April and May
20. Reed Warbler	April and May
21. Wood Warbler	April and May
22. Spotted Flycatcher	May
23. Pied Flycatcher	May
24. Woodchat Shrike	May
25. Stonechat	April and May

FOODS

WITHOUT the slightest doubt the above item is by far the most important factor for the successful keeping and rearing of all classes of cage birds, for like ourselves, if we do not get the best of food, we soon become weak, and unfit to carry out our daily duties or to keep body and soul together.

Therefore let every one that reads this work thoroughly digest the fact that good sound wholesome food is equally essential to our captive birds as to ourselves.

At the outset I should like to say I am not a lover of packet seeds in any shape or form, but much prefer and recommend the same being purchased in its loose state and if possible in separate packages to be mixed by the fancier himself. For in this case you see exactly the kind of sample you are purchasing, and what is more important perhaps, you are far more likely to get *the best* than by purchasing ready mixed seeds and foods.

It is by far and away cheaper and better to go to a respectable seedsman and purchase a pound or two at a time, even if it lasts too long to please you, than to get these small packets of often inferior seeds, and expect your birds to thrive on them which they will not often do, yet if given a change in the way spoken of, it is surprising what a difference in the condition of things it brings about. In the case of soft bills' food, a little discretion has to be used, for there are several excellent

foods that are sold in packets, providing a fair price is paid for the same, but even then if you have the time on your hands I cannot do better than recommend you to purchase your ingredients separately and mix them yourself.

As to the foods and seeds themselves which are mentioned in this work, I will first take those that are recommended for the hard-billed species or finch-like birds.

CANARY SEED.

I mention this first, as undoubtedly there is far more of this used than any other, and I am sorry to say that I know no seed that we use where more deception is meted out to the purchaser than in the case of this one.

If you call at three different seedsmen's shops and ask for samples of best Spanish Canary seed and take them home for examination, you will be more than surprised at the difference of quality in the three samples. One will perhaps be miserably small, or what you might almost term all husk and no kernel, the next larger in size though dark in colour, and the third will be of good size, nice colour, and well polished. This last one is the sample that from the eye should appeal the most to you, and after smelling it and finding it sweet, put a few grains in the mouth and grind them between the teeth, if you find it gives way to the pressure brought to bear upon it with a certain amount of life or moisture in the kernel that is the seed for you, but if on the other hand it absolutely powders in the mouth, reject it, for it is a

thousand to one it is what is termed kiln-dried, and useless as a food for birds, from more points of view than one. Perhaps the two most important are the facts, that invariably it contains a certain amount of sulphur from the fumes of the coal or coke that has been used for the purpose of drying, and secondly the life, nature, and nutriment that is so valuable as a food in sound canary seed, have gone through the process used in harvesting.

This is no idle chatter, and if you try this on, you will be able to bear me out in what I say, for I know for a fact that many birds die every year through being fed on this kiln-dried rubbish, which to my mind is not fit food for pigs let alone valuable cage birds.

HEMP.

The next most important seed I believe is hemp, and you need to notice when purchasing this seed that the smell is sweet, and on cracking the kernel should be of an oily appearance, but if dried up, reject it as it is old and unfit for consumption.

RAPE.

Here again we have a seed that one has to use a deal of discretion in purchasing, for often old seed will be palmed off if you are not careful, and sometimes the large variety is offered, "*as we are just out of the other.*"

Reject the old and also the large black seed and accept only the genuine German Summer Rape, which is very small in size, it varies in colour, and should be quite moist when bit with the teeth, and of rather a bitter flavour.

TEAZLE.

Invariably this valuable food contains a great deal of dust and I advise you to thoroughly sift it before using. In purchasing select the largest sample, which should be rather more bitter to the palate than the Summer Rape.

MAW.

This is in reality the seed of the poppy plant, and owing to its not being cultivated or purchased in anything like the quantities as is the case with the foregoing it is not often complaint can be offered. On tasting, if fresh, it should be of a distinctly sweet flavour.

LINSEED.

This seed is not used a great deal, but is most useful after the moult for putting a polish on the new plumage. On purchasing see that the sample is not too large, does not smell musty, and of good, clean condition.

NIGER OR INGA.

This seed, like the forerunner, is of a very oily nature, and great care is necessary in its administration and use, for if it gets at all damp, it is very apt to turn rank, and the result will be serious to your birds. It should be free from dust, highly polished, and when cracked should reveal a white, oily kernel.

THISTLE.

This is a very valuable food for Goldfinches, but I much prefer the freshly gathered heads, and let the birds remove the seed at their will.

SUNFLOWER SEED.

This seed has come greatly to the front the last three years, and it is without doubt a most valuable food. It can be purchased in black, striped, or white. I much prefer the latter if the same is of the present season's crop, which may be easily found out by cracking the shell and examining the kernel; if of good size and of fresh appearance buy, if not reject; the same applies to the other varieties I have mentioned.

MIXED WILD GRASS SEED.

A little of this thrown into the cages occasionally causes endless amusement, and is wholesome. It can be purchased at any seedsman's.

DANDELION.

Collect the heads before they blow, they are most useful, from a medicinal point of view, to all finch-like birds. Serve in a green or dried condition.

GROUNDSELL.

This is a very common weed which should be known to everyone. A few flower^{ing} heads in the early spring will be relished by all your hard bills.

PLANTAIN SEED.

This should be gathered in the month of September when it will be ripe. If it is not known to you by name I can only describe it by saying it is commonly called " rats tails," which it somewhat resembles in appearance.

DOCK.

This plant is found almost everywhere in the country, its large spreading leaves, used in my boyhood days, to be a cure for nettle stings. It flowers in August, and should then be cut down. I find the Bullfinch particularly fond of it.

SORREL.

Here we get a plant very indeed like the dock in appearance of seedling head, but of totally different flavour. Cut a supply of this when it has dried off and fit for harvesting. Offer it to such birds as Linnets, Siskins, Goldies, and Bullies, and it will be appreciated.

SHEPHERD'S PURSE.

This is a very common weed that is often found in large quantities, inside the gateways of arable lands, and at the sides of country lanes. It is a favourite food of the Linnet, Siskin, and Twite, and the Goldie will often enjoy a nibble, particularly at the flowering head.

I should think everyone knows this common weed. It is of slender growth, with leaves principally against the base, centre stem, which has branches on all sides, bearing at the end clusters of minute white flowers, which ultimately turn into flat seedling pods of a triangular shape.

HARDHEADS.

These are the seedling heads of a plant that when in flower is very like our familiar cornflower, only instead of being that lovely blue, it is of a purplish-red. Goldies

and Siskins are very fond of the seeds of these when ripe and I am a great believer in them.

SOFT-BILL FOODS.

In opening with this matter we perhaps come to a more important discussion than the former, if there is any distinction between them.

I shall start with ants' eggs, as I think without these few of our lovely warblers would survive cage life. It is almost astounding the absolute rubbish that is often sold to the novice as fresh live ants' eggs, and I can assure him that he had by far better keep the money in his pocket than spend it on this worthless stuff.

I have seen in some of the bird rooms I have visited, these so-called best live ants' eggs, and truly they have been nothing short of the cocoons, withered and dried up with age, and often containing pieces of sticks, stone and other *valuable* ingredients and all nutriment gone, and I firmly believe that this is the result of many fanciers saying they don't like soft bills, they are too difficult to keep alive.

This alone, is one of my greatest reasons for recommending the purchasing of the ingredients separately, as you then know the quality of ants' eggs you have.

Fresh and good ants' eggs should be of a whitish colour slightly tinged with buff, appear to the eye as if blown full of wind, and when held between the finger and thumb, should have a kind of an oily or very soft touch.

Now to get really good and very fresh ants' eggs, you

need to pay something like 3s. 6d. per lb., but being as light as vanity they are not dear even at this, as are the others at about 1s. 6d., which are absolutely useless from a nutritive point of view.

DRIED FLIES.

These are in reality the Mexican water-bug, and are caught in gauze nets in the summer time, on the lakes and rivers of Mexico, hence it is often that you find small fish among your flies.

In purchasing these see that the sample is thoroughly good and does not smell musty, although they have a peculiar smell of their own; they should be whole and not broken almost to a powder as is often the case. If the sample tendered to you is such, don't attempt to purchase, as they are stale.

BISCUIT.

I don't think I can recommend you better for the smaller birds, than the powdered sweet biscuit we use at home.

Your grocer will supply you with it in the broken state very cheap.

Powder these up fine by placing in a folded newspaper and the use of a flat iron.

MELOX.

This is a special food or very small biscuit that is manufactured by Messrs. Clarke for conditioning dogs, etc., I believe it contains a great deal of animal nutri-

ment. I find it an excellent foundation for foods for the larger insectivorous birds.

HARD-BOILED EGGS.

Always be sure your eggs are fresh, and boil for fifteen minutes. Having done this peel off the shell, press through a fine sieve and it is ready for use.

BOUGHTON EGG FOOD OR FLAKE.

I shall not attempt to discuss this as I am not a believer in it, for there is nothing to my mind like the egg we boil at home.

BARLEY MEAL.

This is by far the most nutritious of any of our home ground meals, it can easily be obtained in good, sound condition of any respectable corn merchant.

INSECT LIFE.

Next we come to the live part of the bird's larder which is also a most important one.

MEALWORMS.

In these insects which constitute the larvæ form of the bakehouse beetle, we have a most valuable food and one we can on no account do without.

By far the cheapest way is to buy them by weight or by measure, seeing, of course, that you don't get an overdose of bran to help to make up.

If you desire to try and breed these it is not a difficult

task. First get a few dozen beetles from a mill or large bakehouse, don't mistake these for the common cockroach, which is of a polished brown hue, while the ones you require are jet-black and unpolished.

Place these in a large jar, or tub if you like, together with some old sacking and a little bran. They will deposit their eggs on the sacking, and in course of time you will have plenty of mealworms, which of course at first are far too small to be of any use, and should be fed with bran until they become a respectable size, and fit for use.

GENTLES.

These curious looking grubs, which to look at appear to have no heads, are the larval grub of the common blow-fly. I find the best and cheapest place to get these is from the fellmonger's, where all the waste fat and hides from the butchery establishments are dealt with. Of course should you desire to breed them yourself, it is easily accomplished in the summer time, by securing a piece of offal (sheep's head preferred) at the bottom of the garden and covering the same with small-mesh wire, which is sufficiently large in the holes to allow the flies to enter, yet not large enough for the birds to get at it. In about three days you will have abundance of gentles and plenty of smell.

Having got the gentles, I should get a large tin and put plenty of dry sand or earth in it, shake them into this and allow them to scour themselves, they will then be nice and clean and free from smell. In a few days,

probably some of them will rise to the top of the sand in a chrysalis form, use these first or they will soon infest your house with flies.

In serving these grubs I always like to scald them, as I believe they are apt to live in the bird's crop for some time if not done, and cause unnecessary suffering. This is easily accomplished by getting a little fine wire-gauzed strainer from a penny bazaar, putting in the required quantity, and pour boiling water over them, they will then be of a pure white colour and certainly more presentable than before.

WASP GRUB.

This is the larval form of the common wasp, and is for the most part purchased in the cake or comb. I find the most likely place to get it is at a fishing tackle shop, or through the advertisement columns of our "Fancy" papers. Of course should you desire to take the nests yourself, it is not altogether a difficult task, but precaution needs to be taken that you don't get severely stung. The method I have adopted is in the first place to prepare some damp gunpowder made into rolls, about an inch in circumference, and about three inches long, put a pair of gloves on your hands, tie the sleeves of your coat tightly round the wrists and so protect the arms, wear a straw hat and cover the whole of the head with fine gauze or muslin. Place the rolls of gunpowder in the entrance hole as far as you can put them and ignite, having a wet sod of clay or good stiff soil ready on the spade to clap over the hole immediately. Having

done this, leave the powder to do its terrible slaughter for a couple of hours, and then you can safely open the ground and obtain the nest, being careful of course that the wasps that were left outside at the time, don't get on your neck or face. On getting the contents of the nest home, I advise you to spread the cakes out on a large tray, away from the reach of children, as young wasps will crawl out almost daily, and these need to be "despatched" at once.

COCKROACHES.

These are easily obtained in almost any boiler-house of a mill, and if you ask the stoker or engineer, they will gladly get you some for a few coppers. Keep them in a large covered tin with holes in the top and a little bran in the bottom.

SPIDERS.

These valuable insects, as far as we fanciers are concerned, are worth their weight in gold from a medicinal point of view, but are awkward to obtain as a rule in the house; the cellar and coal-shed being the best places. If you can get permission to have a search round some good old loft or stable, you will no doubt find abundance.

CATERPILLARS.

The caterpillar that is for the most part mentioned in this work, is the small green grub, that is to be found in the curled-up leaves of the rose tree and hawthorn bush.

Goldfinch

Carduelis elegans (Stephens)



THE GOLDFINCH

Description of Parent Birds. Male: About five inches in length; short conical bill; flesh-coloured and black at tip; front of face bright scarlet, divided by small line of black feathers, which extends from the eye over the beak; cheeks white, slightly tinged with brown; crown and back of head black, which descends on either side of neck like a band; back pale brown; wing coverts black; quills black, barred with yellow and tipped with white half-moon shaped spots on the tips; throat and belly white, flanked with brown on chest and sides.

Female is similar to the male but is not so broad in the face and blaze, and the shoulders or wing coverts are brown instead of black.

Habitation. Generally found in all parts of Europe in orchards and plantations, and sometimes further afield in search of food. In the autumn and winter they may be seen in small flocks, in rough ground where hard heads, thistles, etc., have not been cut down.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is generally found in the sprigging branches of elm, in forks of fruit trees, in shrubberies, and sometimes in high hedges, generally throughout these islands. Materials used consist of fine roots, moss, dried grass, lichens, wool, and spider webs,

lined with feathers or hair. Five eggs are generally laid, of a greenish-white, spotted and streaked with purplish-brown and grey, particularly on the larger end. They are similar to that of the Greenfinch, but rather smaller. Time : May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. King of all hardbills as a songster, and none the less by way of dress, the Goldie is the favourite I think of all, for meet him when and where you will in his wild life, he seems to put a thrill of joy in you as he flits from one place to another uttering his pretty call note the whole of the time.

I think no more beautiful sight can be pictured than to see this magnificent finch, when all the country around is wrapped in snow, perch on a thistle top securing the seed. This picture is greatly enhanced when the sun is shining, for his beautiful scarlet face, and yellow wing bars, show up most brilliantly against the pure white surroundings of the ground below.

See him and hear him in the spring time when the breeding season has commenced, perched on some bough, with dropped wings, and open tail, swaying from one side to the other, chattering to his mate, apparently feeling so proud of himself that he is almost conceited.

As parents, they have few equals, for if you have the good fortune to find a nest and watch the feeding of the young, you will be surprised at the great amount of food they carry, in a very short space of time, for into the orchards and gardens they sally forth, collecting

grubs and blight from the fruit trees, and seeds of the various wild plants, returning again, and again, from dawn till eve.

Often two or three broods are reared in a season, but invariably the first are the biggest and strongest, not that our little friend does not do his duty, but by reason of the fact that the former food is not in such abundance as the summer moves on. As a songster he is without doubt better than any hardbill, with exception perhaps of the Linnet, but even this sweet musician has not such a cheery melody, or such a sweet action, with it, as our little friend now under review.

Catching. I know no better way of snaring this bird than by the use of a good clean bird lime, evenly laid on a piece of wire or rush, and placed on a twig or thick stick, with a good call bird in the vicinity, preferably Goldfinch Mule.

By adopting the method of liming a rush, or piece of thin wire, as noted above, a great waste of lime is avoided, and it saves the captive from getting in a very wretched condition, which otherwise it would do.

This beautiful bird is now protected the whole year in many counties of England and Wales and great care has to be taken in making his acquaintance.

Meteing off and Steadying. I do not advocate the catching of this bird before the middle of September for the reason that a great quantity do not leave their parents until close on the beginning of that month, but from

this time onward to middle of January they can be caught and meted off with confidence.

Of course a plentiful supply of wild plant heads described below is necessary together with cracked hemp and canary seed, teazle, etc.

As to steadyng, this is not at all a difficult matter as the Goldie quickly settles down to captivity and seems quite at home after a fortnight in a cage or aviary with due care bestowed upon him.

General Feeding. In the wild state a great deal of the Goldie's larder consists of the seeds of various wild plants and grasses. Knapweed is a great favourite of his, and is common on the country side, particularly near hedges and in country lanes. This can and should be given in all stages, likewise thistle heads and other seedling plants. It is a good plan to gather as many thistle and teazle heads as possible in the autumn and, by tying them in a bunch and placing them head downwards in a paper bag, they will prove most useful later on. A general mixture of canary seed, hemp, rape, maw and linseed, with a liberal supply of teazle and cracked sunflower seed, will be found most beneficial.

In the early spring we approach a period of the year when most all our feathered friends change their diet, and the Goldie at this time should have access to a plentiful supply of groundsell, young leaves of the dandelion, etc. Then in April and on we are able to obtain the seedling heads of the latter plant which is without doubt of the greatest service to them at this

time of year by generally cleansing the whole system and counteracting the fattening foods that they have had during the winter.

If the seedling heads of dandelion are hung up in a similar way to that described for the thistle and teasel heads, they will be found an excellent remedy for stomach and blood troubles during the winter. In fact this seed must be supplied if your Goldies are to be kept in sound and robust health. Other seedling plants he will appreciate are such well-known growths as ragworts, hawkweed, lettuce and milk thistle. As not only do they secure natural seed in this way but many a toothsome grub is found hidden away in the seed-pods. These he will relish, and too many cannot be supplied, as a most trying time, *i.e.*, the moulting season, is now drawing near, at which time it is most essential that the general health of all birds should be at its best or it is a great chance if they will survive this trying ordeal.

Hand Rearing. Owing to the great docility of this bird, I don't recommend this adoption as, generally speaking, a fortnight's careful treatment of the adult he will settle down and become quite at home.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird, the Goldie has no equal, and I think I should not be wrong in saying that there are as many Goldfinches exhibited to-day as any other two species put together. For years they have been provided with a class to themselves at all exhibi-

tions where cage birds are catered for, and now often two classes are provided, one for the adults and one for Greypates, or unmoulted specimens.

An exhibition Goldfinch should have an expansive blaze, clean and square cut, of a deep pure scarlet colour, extending well back behind the eyes and below the beak; this latter point is very essential. The minute margin of black feathers round the beak should be as narrow as possible, and free from greyness. The black cap and band round the neck should be perfect in definition and colour. A nice width is about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch, but the broader the skull the narrower the black will appear. As to the cheeks, they should be as broad as possible of a whitish colour slightly tinged with brown. The chest and belly should be the same colour as the cheeks, the former and sides well tanned with a bright nutty-brown colour, not too dark in shade.

Now as to the wings. A most important point. See that the wing coverts are of a jet-black and lying well into the sides of the bird. Good broad wing bars of the richest lemon chrome; these should be well and clearly cut. The spots or buttons on the primary flights should be of half-moon shape and following well in line with each other to the end of the wing. Tail medium length and as compact as possible and the large spots near the tip of even dimensions. General carriage is of great importance, and should be as erect as possible. Plenty of bloom and tightness of feather are also most essential items that go to make an exhibition Goldie.

Attractive Qualities. Generally speaking, the Goldie is a most beautiful bird, lively and active, being ever on the move. His sweet little song is constant in confinement, with the exception of the moulting season or through some ailment that has befallen him. As to general health, I know no bird more hardy than this. If taught when young, many little tricks will he accomplish, and is frequently let fly about the room at will. As to docility and cheek I think he has no equal in the whole of his feathered brethren.

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula europaea (Vieillot).



The property of the AUTHOR.

THE BULLFINCH

Description of Parent Birds. Male : Length about six inches ; bill short, thick and black ; base of beak, chin and head jet-black ; nape, back and lesser wing coverts a beautiful soft grey ; greater coverts steel-black, tipped with white, which forms the bar across the quills, which are of a dusky colour ; the rump is pure white ; under parts of neck and breast, to the centre of belly, brick-red, the latter colour is brighter in older birds ; vent and under tail coverts white ; upper tail coverts and quills steel-black.

Female : Black head, chin, wings and tail, but not of so dense a colour as the former ; nape and back brownish-grey ; breast, belly and under parts of a dirty brown. Generally smaller than her mate.

Habitation. To be found generally throughout the whole of Europe, along country lanes, hedges, on the lower branches of trees, in woods and coppices, particularly where the privet and dewberry abound, generally moving in the early spring to the orchards that abound with bud, on which they feed very greedily.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is composed of small twigs and dried roots loosely woven together, and lined with wool, hair or feathers. Generally speaking, five eggs are laid of a pale greenish-blue, spotted on the larger end

with purplish-brown. Time: throughout April, May, June and July. I have seen them sitting as late as the second week in August in Gloucestershire.

Countryside Notes. “There’s a Bully!” is the general cry of every lad as he sees this handsome bird flit down the wild hedge of some country lane; but he does not go far, for he mounts upon some prominent sprig, calling his mate with his flute-like note. Yes, and truly beautiful he looks with his crimson breast and black head, all polished to the most brilliant extent, and done by constant bathing and preening, and the best of food obtainable, with which he is provided by nature. I think every school lad knows him, and no wonder, for he finds favour everywhere, either wild or in confinement. Just look out for him on a frosty morning, when the hoar frost is on the outside world as you pass down the side of a privet hedge. There he is as happy and contented as possible, despite the weather, feasting away on these berries, his principal diet in winter.

In the springtime he and his mate are a perfect study, for then he is as proud almost as the Chaffinch, and his little dull-coloured lady is equally as proud as he. 'Tis true they are not specialists in nest building, but better parents I know none than the Bullie. He is no friend of the market gardener and farmer unfortunately, for, being a rascal with the buds in early spring, he has in most cases to pay the full penalty if he comes in the reach of the gun.

I have heard many arguments on this matter. Some

say he does good in this direction, and others harm. Of course I favour the first-named for obvious reasons, and I should much like to see him with more careful protection than he is having, which he certainly deserves, not for his song, for he is blest with little or no musical powers, but for his beauty and comeliness, to adorn our countryside and a pleasure to all who meet him.

Catching. This bird I have found a most easy prey if a call bird of the opposite sex to the one you require is used. In the shilling trap cage with the apartment underneath, I have caught seven in one afternoon by placing a hen in the lower part of the cage and a bunch of privet berries on the trap board. I have never seen them attempt to reach the berries so placed, and have often thought that no bait was necessary, as apparently it is out of pure curiosity that they enter the top apartment. Another way is by using the ordinary call cage and bird and placing lime twigs close by. If there is a Bullfinch in the locality I think you can safely count on securing it in this way, providing of course that your bird will call. I am not in favour of the use of lime if it can be avoided, as in many cases the shock to the system will kill the captive.

Meteing off and Steadying. The former is a matter that needs great care, or you will soon find the whole of your captives dead. I advise you to place them in a store cage, with sand bottom and plenty of water, in a quiet place, say for a couple of hours after taking.

Then provide a bunch or two of privet or blackberries, and again leave them. On visiting some two hours after throw in some slightly cracked hempseed and a little rape. The following day provide a handful of good mixed seed and berries again, and continue to do this, but on no account worry your bird. After a few weeks' treatment in this way it should be fit to come into the living or bird room. Steadying this bird will be most easily accomplished with ordinary care.

General Feeding. He is very partial to sunflower seed in any stage of ripeness and at all times. A good stock mixture containing hemp, canary, rape and flax should be given by way of seed, but this alone will not keep your Bullie in good all-round condition. In the early Spring of the year when all the trees are shooting with bud, cut some twigs from the various fruit trees and offer them to him; he will be very grateful to you, as it is by the way of his partiality for these that the gardener has lost all respect for this beautiful bird. If, however, you are unable to obtain the above, a substitute may be found in the various seedling heads of many weeds which he will enjoy, for not only is he fond of the seeds and the buds, but invariably there are grubs inside that are not visible to the human eye. I may perhaps here mention a few of the seedling heads of which the Bullie is fond which can be found in the Spring and Summer months: chickweed, groundsel, shepherds' purse, dandelion heads, milk thistle and hard-heads. The whole of those should be supplied without limit and as

often as obtainable. When the moulting season is at hand obtain a good supply of mountain ash, elder and blackberries—the latter in all stages of ripeness; and as the time goes on the greatest of all colouring agents comes within our reach, viz., the privet berry; this is obtainable nearly throughout the winter, and should be given whenever possible. In supplying all or any of these berries I advise you to put spray and all into the cage, and let your Bullie serve himself as he thinks fit; further, by this means they do not get so soiled on the floor of the cage. These then are undoubtedly most necessary edibles in addition to the seed if you are to keep your Bullfinch in robust health and of good colour.

Hand Rearing. Owing to the great docility of this bird I do not consider it time well spent in hand rearing, as when caught they are invariably of far more robust constitution than if brought up by hand.

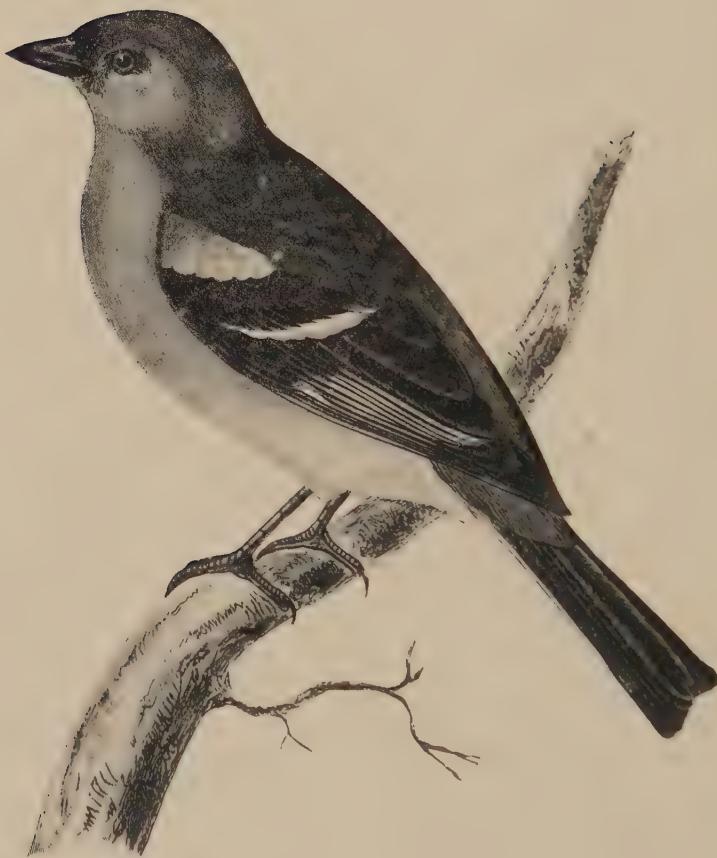
Exhibiting. There is no question as to the great popularity this bird holds for exhibition purposes, and rightly he should do, for not only is he most handsome in colour and markings, smart in position on perch, but, above all, a most affectionate bird to his owner and strangers alike. In selecting a specimen for exhibition take care to notice the following details:—Not too large in body to have the suspicion of being a foreigner; good broad head; jet-black and clean-cut cap; breast of the brightest possible hue; back a pure soft grey; wings well carried, not crossed at tips, marked with well-defined bars of greyish-white; fairly bold in chest, and not too long in tail.

Attractive Qualities. Although the song is of very short duration it is none the less very sweet and flute-like, and it has often been taught to whistle a tune with great exactitude. Added to this I think there is no bird more affectionate and tame than the one under observation, and it is allowed to fly about the rooms in many houses where it is kept.

Like many others, this bird is known by different names in various parts of the country. Some of these are Bullspink, Beechfinch, Twink, Nope, Hoop, Redfinch and Redbunting.

Chaffinch

Fringilla cœlebs (Linnæus).



CHAFFINCH

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six inches; bill short, and of conical shape, pointed at end, blue in breeding season and of flesh-colour in winter; forehead black; crown of head, neck and part of sides steel-blue; back reddish-brown; rump and upper tail coverts a mixture of yellow and green; lesser wing coverts white; greater wing coverts black tipped with white; quills are of a dirty hue edged with bright greenish-yellow and greyish near the base; tail quills black, shading to grey in the centre of tail; the outer feathers are prominently marked with white; cheeks, throat, breast and underparts terra-cotta, shading to a lighter colour at the vent.

Female is smaller; head, neck and back are of greyish-brown; chest and all other parts of a far darker shade than the male, and the wing markings are less conspicuous.

Habitation. Generally common throughout the United Kingdom, frequenting forests, woods, orchards, etc., but in Winter it comes closer to the dwellings of man for a purpose of finding food. In the dead of winter large flocks can be seen in the vicinity of rick yards and homesteads.

Nest and Eggs. In the wild state this bird generally builds in the forks of fruit and other trees, in tops of hedges, and sometimes amongst the gorse. The nest, which is truly a work of art in itself, its beauty being almost indescribable, consists of moss, lichens and spider-webs, all woven most beautifully together in a cup-like form with a lining of hair and feathers.

Five eggs are generally the number laid, which are inclined to vary in colouration in different localities, but the majority are of a bluish-green, ground with a slight tinge of red, spotted and blotched with a purplish-brown. Time, April, May and June.

Countryside Notes. Although one of our commonest countryside birds, he is none the less handsome; in fact to my mind he has none that surpasses him when in full spring garb.

He is as hardy as any of his neighbours, and is well able to bear the strange vicissitudes of our climate, never seeming to be pinched with the terrible cold of some of our Winters.

Most blithe and lively are his habits, and he is frequently met on your country walks. I have known him continue along the path in front of me for quite 200 yards, always apparently keeping the same distance away, so quick is his movement on foot. If I attempt to overtake him, he flits over the hedge or up into the nearest tree, wiping his beak on the bough. See him in April on the low branch of a chestnut or beech tree,

what a model of neatness, what a charming array of colouring, and, lastly, what grand condition he is in after the terrible privations of Winter.

Yes, he seems to study his dress almost as much as his life, for, even in the Winter, when the sun is making the most of itself felt on its short circuit, I have often seen him bathing in the farmyard pond or even a puddle in the road, after to retreat to some friendly tree to preen his feathers and look smart again. As a mate for his little sombre-coloured lady I know no more audacious and affectionate little chap than he, for it matters not where she may care to go he must escort her, and, when the little chicks come to town, a prouder father cannot be imagined than our little friend herein described.

It is wonderful, indeed, the magnificent work that is carried out by these birds, by way of nest building, and there is no question that they build the most beautiful of any of our hardbills, and, not content with the materials that are supplied by Nature, many times they have made use of paper and other material to enliven the outside of their little home.

In the Springtime I know no more powerful or joyous song than that of the Chaffinch, and beautiful he looks pouring forth this wonderful melody, to the greatest power of his lungs, in close vicinity of his sitting mate, but when the breeding season is over all we hear of him is his pink, pink, pink, as he wanders along the ground, passing away the dreary days of Winter to Springtime again.

Catching. This bird is generally caught by means of the clap nets in large numbers in the winter season, particularly in the vicinity of rick yards and cow shelters.

Meteing off and Steadying. Unfortunately, this is a most nervous bird when fresh caught, and it requires a deal of patience to bring about the desired effect, and usually a moult has to take place before he turns his wild demeanour to docility. An excellent way to steady him is to place him into an ordinary Finch show cage with glass placed against the front to prevent him injuring himself with the wire. Keep in the living room of the house, and give him an occasional meal-worm or other tit-bit. By these means I have steadied many fine specimens of this beautiful bird.

General Feeding. Speaking of this most important item I don't think I know any other bird that requires a greater variety of food than the Chaffinch, that is if he is to be kept up to concert pitch. Owing to the fact that the diet of this bird during the whole of the Spring and Summer months consists principally of live insects and cocoons, we must carry out Nature's work as near as possible by supplying meal-worms, ants' eggs, and wasp grub, whenever obtainable, with his ordinary diet. Green food is not generally appreciated by this bird, although a sprig of chickweed he will sometimes do justice to. As a general stock mixture you will find he will eat almost every kind of seed you place before him, but hemp should only be given sparingly. You will

find him very fond of slightly cracked sunflower seed and beech mast, particularly as a change of diet.

Hand Rearing. I do not consider this bird worth the trouble.

Exhibiting. Simply magnificent ! I think are the only words that will do justice to the Chaffinch in exhibition form, that is, of course, providing he is in breeding condition, with his full Spring garb and sprightliness, and I am pleased to see that he is getting a great favourite among exhibitors, as rightly he should do, and at many of the larger shows a class is provided entirely for him.

In selecting a show specimen, go for a good sized bird, with plenty of general vigour. Colours all round should be of the brightest possible shades, and the whites at shoulders and the bars in the primary flights should be prominent and well defined. The bird should take up a good position when perched and with head well erect.

Attractive Qualities. Speaking of the good qualities of this bird—I really know none bad, with the exception that, as a muler and hybridizer, he is an awkward customer to deal with; but his wonderfully hearty song, perky way, and lastly his beautiful array of colours in his general dress, more than makes good the lacking qualities spoken of. Taking a ramble in the country in the early Spring, one cannot help noticing the great

power with which he pours forth his song to his little mate on the top of a branch of a bush or tree, in which they have decided to settle down and rear their brood.

Local and Other Names. Bullspink, Skelly, Spink, Twink, Shell-Apple, Buckfinch, Whitefinch, Piefinch, and Copperfinch.

Greenfinch

Ligurinus chloris (Linnæus).



GREENFINCH

Description of Parent Birds. Male : Length about six inches; bill short and thick, of a pale flesh colour; head, neck and back and upper tail coverts yellowish-green; wings dirty green, bordered with bright yellow on outer webs; centre of tail dirty green, webs of outer feathers edged with yellow; throat, breast and belly bright yellowish-green; vent of a whitish tinge.

Female is much more sombre in her dress than the male, the whole of the upper parts being of a greenish-grey, while the wing coverts, rump and tail are tinged with a yellow of a much less prominent hue than that of the male.

Habitation. Generally common throughout the United Kingdom, in most all country and rural districts, and often in the smaller towns during the severe weather of Winter.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is generally built in hedges, gorse, evergreens and ivy, and sometimes in orchards. It is a rather loosely composed structure, and consists of dried roots, grass and moss, and lined with feathers or hair. Five eggs are generally the number of the clutch, of a pale greenish-white, tinged with blue, lightly spotted with brown on the larger end. Time : generally speaking, the whole of the Spring and Summer months.

Countryside Notes. The beauty of this bird is never seen to better advantage I think than when in flock in the winter time, either on the bare hedges and trees or the rich-coloured soil of the land.

Although the commonest of our Finches, he is none the less interesting and handsome, for his beauty no one can deny. Although perhaps of rather a clumsy build, his plumage is of the brightest, consisting as it does of the brightest golden-yellow to the richest of greens, on to a most beautiful ash-grey and black. It is only necessary to disturb him in his feeding grounds, say in February, when he is showing his brightest of colouring owing to the closeness of the breeding season, that you can appreciate his handsome garb, for it is then that you are able to obtain a full view of his glorious beauty, even to the spreading of the tail as he flits on the hedge, uttering his call-note.

I know of no more affectionate bird to his little mate and family than the one under observation, for he keeps in close proximity to them the whole of the anxious time of rearing and nursing, and not until the first brood are able to provide for themselves does he seem to consider the coming of his second family. Some ornithologists seem to think that he is of a nervous nature when wild, and difficult to approach, but I cannot say that I have found him more so than any other species of hardbill, particularly in the harder weather of Winter when the country is bound with snow. At this time he seems almost beholding to you if you meet him in a rick yard, for he chatters away at the top of the fence, as if he was

thanking you for the scanty meal he had been able to secure.

For song he is not an artist by any means, but none the less his effort is of a pleasing nature, particularly in the pairing season of the year. When wild its general food consists of seeds of various wild plants, such as dock, grass, hard-heads, ragworts, etc., together with flies, caterpillars, beetles and other grub-like insects, but when the hard weather drives him around the homesteads of the farmer he has to resort to whatever he can find. No doubt the market gardener has much cause for complaint of the havoc done by this bird, and Greenie has to pay the penalty by the loss of his life in many cases, for seeds, buds, and even young plants, are all attractions for him in the early Spring.

Catching. This bird is generally caught in large numbers in and around rick yards in the Winter, together with other birds of the Finch tribe by means of clap nets; I have also caught it in the common trap cage, with hen bird in underpart.

Meteing off and Steadying. This is a very easy matter with this bird, as, not being of a shy nature, he will readily take to an ordinary Finch mixture if placed in the cage and soon become quite steady.

General Feeding. He is particularly fond of sunflower seed at all seasons and all stages of ripeness. A good stock mixture containing plenty of hemp should

be served. In the spring a plentiful supply of green food, such as groundsel, dandelion, chickweed, shepherds' purse, etc., together with plenty of wild grasses, hard-heads, etc., and berries of the privet and juniper when obtainable. You will find him become most affectionate if you occasionally offer him a mealworm or other grub you may be able to procure.

Hand Rearing. I do not think this bird is worth it.

Exhibiting. The Greenie is fast becoming a favourite amongst all lovers of British birds for exhibition purposes, and quite rightly, for I know no more beautiful bird than this for all round good qualities, if you happen to be favoured with a really good one. In selecting an exhibition specimen get one as bright a colour as possible, showing plenty of yellow on the face, wings, belly and tail. Size is of great importance in this bird, likewise the general position of the bird when perched. See that he is not pinched on the head, and that the wings don't cross when standing.

Attractive Qualities. When in robust health and condition of the first order, or even in wild life, the Greenfinch is a handsome bird, and, moreover, is one of the easiest to obtain, for thousands fall a prey to the catcher each Winter, and by constantly visiting these gentlemen a dozen good specimens should be obtained without difficulty. When in his wild haunts, particularly

in the breeding season, he is of rather a wary nature, and, generally speaking, the nearest view you can obtain of him is at the top of some high bush or tree shouting his war cry, which consists of only one note, followed often by a chattering noise when flying, but as to his song he really has none worth speaking of, but if reared by hand will often mimic other birds around him.

Local Names. Green Linnet, Grosbeak, and Green Lintie.

Bramblefinches

Fringilla montifringilla (Linnæus).



The property of Mr. H. J. CHICK, Nottingham.

BRAMBLEFINCH

Description of Parent Birds. Male : Length about six inches ; head, cheeks and nape black, speckled with buff ; back black, with each feather edged with cinnamon-brown ; tail quills black on the inner webb, white on the outer webb ; lesser wing coverts cinnamon-brown ; greater wing coverts black ; lesser flights black, edged with cinnamon-brown ; greater flights black on the inner side, pale yellow on outer edge ; chin, throat and breast cinnamon-brown ; belly white ; sides buff, with lacing of minute black feathers ; under tail coverts buff and white.

Female is about the same size as the male, but far less brilliant in colouring.

Habitation. This bird is a winter migrant to these islands, and is fairly common. It moves about in large flocks, accompanied by Chaffinches, Linnets and Buntings. I have seen the hedges lined with them when the snow is on the ground, and most conspicuous are their yellow breasts against the sombre twigs. It is at these hard times that they fall such an easy prey to the catcher. In the early Spring they move north again to settle down to their domestic duties.

Countryside Notes. About the middle of October, or early in November, this beautiful bird arrives in this country from the North to spend the dreary days of

Winter. No one can picture I think a more conspicuous and beautiful sight, from an ornithology point of view, than a flock of these birds on the bare hedges and trees. Even the hens, in their far more sombre dress, show up conspicuously against the dark branches.

The clatter is one to be remembered, if you happen to meet a good flock as they fly off for a further branch they make a most imposing spectacle.

This is another beautiful species that falls a most easy prey to the catcher, for, when in company with Linnets, in the hard weather very little inducement is needed to get a good haul in the nets.

As to song, this is not so long as his tail, but for his continual J-a-c-k, J-a-c-k, very little else in the shape of sound comes from this bird, at any rate, in the winter period of the year, and I have reason to believe that he has little or no other vocabulary to sing from.

Catching. Like the Linnet, the Bramblefinch is caught in very large numbers by means of the clap nets. A most favourable time to use them is when the country is clad with snow.

Lay your nets in the vicinity of some rickyard, scatter a bucket full of chaff between them, and you should not be long getting as many as you can carry, for when catching these you invariably catch other species, such as Starlings, Linnets, Yellow and Cirl Buntings, Chaffinches, Tits, etc. A pretty mixture you may say, but my friend you may take it from me that the greater part

of our champions on the show bench to-day are caught by this means.

Meteing off and Steadying. I advise you to adopt the same method of meteing off and steadyng as recommended in the case of the Chaffinch with the exception of some of the insect life, which you will do well to supplant with a plentiful supply of beech mast and grass seed, and as a tit-bit occasionally a mealworm will answer admirably.

Here you have in steadyng a perfect teaser, for truly I know no more, I won't say nervous, but, wild bird to contend with than this one, for invariably it is not until after being twice moulted that he will settle down to anything like respectable quietude.

General Feeding. As a general stock mixture you will find him fond of hemp, sunflower, canary, teazle, linseed and rape, but it is necessary to supply beech mast and grass seed whenever possible. As to live insects, you will find him fond of small mealworms, ants' eggs, caterpillars, spiders and gentles, and to enable you to get the small amount of pleasure there is to be got out of him, it is necessary to supply live food in plenty.

Hand Rearing. Of course this cannot be done, as the bird does not breed here.

Exhibiting. I know hardly any other purpose for which this bird is kept, but for this, and it is true he looks handsome, if in the best of form, in a show cage,

providing he is a tip top specimen, and one deserves a little satisfaction after seeing the amount of trouble and anxiety he has been to steady down. In the majority of shows he has to compete in the A.O.V. hardbill classes, but at some of the larger shows he either gets classed with the Chaffinch or has one to himself.

In selecting your specimen get one of great size; good bold chest and head; breast of as rich a colour as possible; head well spangled, but not blotchy; eyes free from a circle of minute light feathers called "spectacles"; wings close to side, compact; and bars well defined and of good rich colour. The small black feathers in the back should be edged with brown forming a lacing, and the sides below wings should be well ticked with two rows of small black feathers.

Attractive Qualities. With the exception of the mention made above, under the heading of exhibiting, I really know no other good qualities possessed by this bird, for he is not docile, or a songster, for all he seems able to accomplish by way of the latter is a continual Jack, Jack, and a long drawn out churr, so that I am not in a position to recommend him but for exhibition purposes, and truly a tyrant at that.

Linnæt

Linola cannabina (Linnæus).



The property of the AUTHOR.

THE LINNET

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length five and a half inches; bill short and sharp at end, blue in spring and summer, horn colour in winter. The plumage is a miniature study in browns; forehead and skull brownish-red; nape, neck, back and sides a rich brown; upper wing coverts deep rusty-brown; tail quills brownish-black, edged with white; chin, throat and belly stony-coloured brown, heavily marked on the chest with crimson when wild, which it loses after first moult in confinement, the crimson disappearing, leaving minute feathers of a darker shade.

Female is hardly so large as the male, has no red on head or breast; the white in the quills is not so distinct, and is generally of not so rich a colour.

Habitation. Generally common throughout the British Isles. In the Summer they are to be found on the hills where furze abounds. In the Autumn and Winter in the freshly cut corn-fields, stubble grounds and rick yards.

Nest and Eggs. Generally found in furze, heather and thorn bushes, on the hills and moors, where solitude reigns. It consists of dried grass and roots, moss and wool, with lining of hair and feather. Five eggs are the general number (I have known only four), of a greyish-white, tinged with bluish-green, spotted with reddish-

purple on the larger end. Time: April, May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. You only need to visit some rural hillside, where gorse and heather abound, about the month of April, to be able to fully appreciate the sweet song of the Linnet.

See him sat on the side of some furze bush, with his blood-red breast and forehead of the brightest, and his general attire at its best. Ease is not the word for it, for he seems to feel as if all his life was one long Summer, as he sings away his wondrous song, generally starting with *tollick, tollick*, and finishing with one sweet low note. But you musn't get too near him, or he will fly. Stand at a reasonable distance, and as the sweet breath of Spring wafts towards you so his song is more distinctly heard, like the bell in the village church steeple.

Yes, he is a most beautiful songster, and I think he is fully appreciated by all who know him, but for the farmer who is inclined to give him a very short licence owing to the supposed damage done to seed crops, particularly turnips, swedes, etc. But he, in my poor opinion, more than counteracts all this, for in the Autumn and Winter tons of wild charloc seed, etc., are devoured that would otherwise grow and overcrowd more useful vegetation.

All the birds of our countryside are sent by our Great Creator for a good purpose, and right well should their protection be supported by all.

As a nest builder he has few equals, and as a parent none are better. He is a most prolific breeder, often as many as three and four nests being reared in one season, and well enough such need be the case. See the thousands that fall a prey to the catcher year by year, and yet plenty left, although it is not so plentiful as it used to be, particularly in the West and North of England. If this continued depreciation is to go on I am afraid the years are but few when our sweet little friend herein described will be almost as rare as many of his more gaudy plumaged neighbours that at one time were plentiful, but to-day are almost conspicuous by their absence.

Catching. No better way can be adopted than that mentioned for the Bramblefinch.

Meteing off and Steadying. When first caught I advise you to give him a good supply of common rape seed and water. Let him alone for a day on this, then if you have more than one cage off separately if possible, and feed principally on best clean canary seed, rape, teazle and linseed, with a pinch of hemp now and then by way of a change, not of course forgetting wild seedling heads of plants and green food when obtainable, such as chickweed, shepherds' purse, etc.

Steadying is by no means a difficult matter to accomplish, for the Linnet, like the Bullfinch, is of a docile nature if kindly treated and attended to. I have had no difficulty in this direction with this bird.

General Feeding. Unfortunately this bird is one of the many that is very apt to get too fat, which sets up disorders of the liver and bowels, which ultimately ends fatally in most cases unless immediately taken in hand, and as a consequence more than ordinary care has to be taken to keep down superfluous fat and overheating of the blood. This is particularly the case when one is not very well versed with the general feeding and tries to do his bird one better than someone else. So to avoid this sad state of affairs I advise you to follow as closely as possible what I have advised hereunder. As a general stock mixture take one-half bulk of teazle, with other of equal quantities linseed, Winter and Summer rape and canary seed—the latter I find he is not a great lover of—and if such seeds as German rape and teazle are at hand he will show you his preference for these.

Green food and seedling heads with this bird is most necessary, and you will find him most partial to chickweed, lettuce, dandelion, shepherds' purse, knapweed, hard-heads, plantain, dock and sorrel, and on no account fail to provide these all the year round, as they will counteract the fattening nature of the other foods.

Hand Rearing. I cannot recommend this, as I do not consider it worth while, as invariably, if properly cared for, the Linnet will become so docile that it is almost possible to do anything with him—say nothing of hybridizing and muling.

Exhibiting. In the Linnet we have a truly famous exhibition bird. Loved as he is by all, rich and poor

alike, notwithstanding his sombre plumage, he makes a most beautiful addition to the show bench if put down in nice condition and steady.

When selecting a bird for this purpose go for a bird of good size and shape. I prefer the Norwich canary type, that is, short and thick, plenty of chest and body. The colour should not be the extreme of darkness, or either too light, with the pencilling distinctly visible throughout the body; the chest as deep a tint of chestnut-brown as possible, well covered with pencilling and free from light centre streak.

Of course, general carriage is a great thing. Don't buy a bird that crouches, but one that stands well, erect on the perch, and carries his wings well into the sides.

Attractive Qualities. Here you have a bird that is a sweet musician, good muler and hybridizer, in fact all that one could wish by way of a caged pet.

Lovely as he is at all times, singing away his sweet little song over and over again, never seeming to tire, smart and polished in his sombre dress of many tints of brown, he almost seems to make you think that without him your home would miss one of its greatest attractions. His great affection for his attendant is almost human, for I have had them to fly on my hand and head when some tit-bit has been in evidence when he had been out of his cage.

Yes! for his all-round good qualities he may have equals, but none are better.

Siskin

Chrysomitris spinus (Linnæus).



The property of the AUTHOR.

THE SISKIN

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five inches; short, sharp conical bill; top of head and chin black; yellow line over and under the eye; sides of head light yellowish-green; nape and wings olive-green, except greater wing coverts and flights, which are dirty black, bordered with bright orange yellow; tail dirty black, yellow on the upper side; rump yellow; upper tail coverts olive-green; throat, breast and belly yellowish-olive; sides and under tail coverts yellowish-white, striped with black.

Female is slightly smaller, and is lacking the dense black on head and chin, and body colouring is not so bright.

Habitation. Rarely, if ever, breeds in England and Wales, principally in Scotland and Ireland, but frequently goes as far south in the Winter as Hertfordshire. I have seen it in most all the western counties from the month of October onwards until it returns to the north again for breeding purposes.

Nest and Eggs. Generally placed in shrubs and furze in the forests and wilder parts of Scotland and Ireland. The former is generally composed of dried grass, lichens and moss, lined with hair or down. Five eggs are generally laid (I have known six on one occasion near

Wicklow) of a bluish-grey colour, spotted, and marked principally on the larger end with a rusty-brown. Time: May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. A more pleasing sight would be hard to find for a lover of ornithology than a flock of these charming little birds in a pine forest in the Autumn and Winter months. I have seen as many as thirty and forty at a time in a plantation in the West of England, what with their continual chattering to one another and their extraordinary attitudes in order to thoroughly investigate every seedling pod and obtain the seeds and insects that abound in them.

On a fine Autumn morning their sweet song is superb, though not of a long duration, the sprightliness and effort put forth to out-do one another in vocal power is surprising, and at that time even the hens in their glee make a bold effort to increase their singing powers.

It is no difficult matter to get in close proximity of these when in their feeding haunts, for in the caged or wild state they at all times appear to think that in man they have a protector and friend.

Catching. The snaring of this bird is as easy as any one that I know for, when once a flock is located, it is only necessary to get your "call bird" and a twig well anointed with some good clean lime and the result is almost astonishing, for, like the little Redpoll, they seem almost powerless to resist the temptation, and they flitter down, one after the other, on to the twig and cage,

and even after they see others stuck fast, still they come. But, dear reader, if you ever go Siskin or Redpoll catching, pray don't be too covetous for while you are waiting for the others to alight, those that are already on the lime are getting in a sorry plight. Be satisfied if you get no more, take what settles first and free them from their wretched position.

Meteing off and Steadying. These two matters are most easily accomplished, for once he is used to his cage he settles down without any difficulty, and it is quite unnecessary to adopt any particular mode of feeding in the early day of caged life.

Feeding. Being a gluttonous bird, it is most necessary to vary the food stuffs and add a good supply of green foods whenever obtainable, otherwise he is likely to grow fat with fatal results.

As a general stock mixture, that which is recommended for the Goldie will suit him admirably, not forgetting a plentiful supply of teazle, maw and dandelion seeds, all of which he is particularly fond, and the latter is a most beneficial food, for it is cooling to the system and a reducer of fat.

Hand Rearing. This is decidedly unnecessary with this bird, as I have before stated he is almost domesticated when in the wild state, therefore turn your thoughts to other things of greater importance.

Exhibiting. Generally competing as it does in the Twite and Redpoll class, it stands a most excellent chance of premier position, providing you have a tip top specimen.

In selecting this see that your bird is of a good bold chest, and of rich colour throughout. The black feathers under the chin, called the bib, should be cleanly cut, and free from light feathers (some Siskins have no bibs; these are useless for exhibition purposes). See that the wings are well carried to the sides, and the bars across the same well defined. Sides should be neatly ticked with minute black feathers, and lastly the skull should have a distinct lacing on the edge of each feather.

Attractive Qualities. I think I cannot speak too well of this sweet bird as a cage pet, for not only is he most docile to his keeper, but a delightful entertainer to everyone. When not climbing on the wires of his cage he is invariably cleaning his feet, and if his life depended upon the cleanliness of the latter more care could not be taken.

Then, again, there is his engaging little song, sweet at all times, and most cheerfully sung, seeming to know that you appreciate him as much as he appreciates you.

Redpoll

Linota rufescens (Vieillot).



LESSER REDPOLL

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about four and a half inches; bill short and conical and of horn colour; crown of head bright red; cheeks brown; nape, back, rump and upper tail coverts dark brown, bordered with a lighter shade; wings dirty black, edged with pale brown; middle and greater wing coverts tipped with light brown, forming bars; tail dirty black in centre and light brown on outer sides; on the chin is a formation of black feathers called the bib; throat and breast bright red; sides and under parts dirty white.

Female is a smaller bird, and is lacking the red breast and crown of the male, and is not so rich in general colouring.

Habitation. Generally common throughout the North of England, Scotland and Wales and some parts of Ireland. It moves further south and south-west as Winter approaches.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is generally built in hazel, hawthorn or elm trees and sometimes in hedges; I have known it in fir plantations. It consists of fine twigs, dried grass and moss, with a lining of down, hair or feathers.

Five eggs are the general number, of a light greenish-blue, spotted on the larger end with a cinnamon-red, often lightly veined with a darker red. Time: April, May and June.

Countryside Notes. I have met this charming little bird in the North and South in Winter and Summer, Springtime and Autumn; and, see him when you will, he is always a most attractive object to look upon, always seeming to be a most satisfied little chap whatever may befall him by way of bad weather, the catcher or any other misfortune.

See him in the Autumn when the flowers in our gardens are white with heavy dew, searching the shrubs and trees for minute seeds that are there as if for him alone, one moment head downwards, the next hanging by one leg, busy as can be picking and sorting the good from the bad. Tired, or rather had all there is to have in that tree, he goes on to the next, carefully examining every cone or flowering pod that catches his peart little eye. On, on, up the rows of trees until night fall, busy all the time, never seeming to tire, day in and day out. In the springtime when domestic duties call him to give attention to his better half, he settles down in earnest and makes a most excellent parent, attending most closely to the wants of his little mate and young.

Catching. There are two methods that can be adopted for the snaring of this bird. Firstly, and probably the

most successful from a numerical point of view, is that of the use of bird-lime carefully spread on a twig and placed near the call cage containing a male bird of the same species. The lime should be of a fairly stiff nature, or your little captives will get in a most deplorable condition in their great effort to regain their liberty. Some notes will be found relating also to this bird in same matter dealing with the Siskin, and I sincerely hope you will endeavour to note them if ever you take up this system of capture. Secondly, a very good way, and, to my mind, the most humane of all, is that of the trap cage, with bird in under part; bait your trap with some mixed seed, including dock and teazle, and if your call bird is one of good merit, and there are Redpolls in the vicinity, you will not be long in securing a few, and these, unlike those caught with lime, will be in perfect feather and condition.

Meteing off and Steadying. This is no difficult matter to accomplish, as I have before stated. He seems to look to man for protection, and readily settles down to the new condition of things. As to food at this period, feed exactly as recommended in general feeding and no difficulty should follow.

General Feeding. I find that this bird will thrive if fed on entirely the same food as recommended for the Siskin, with an occasional spider or mealworm if he will eat them, which it is very rarely they won't do, as they

are partial to insect food, particularly in the breeding season and during the moult.

Hand Rearing. I don't consider this necessary by any means. Spend your time on something better.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird the Redpoll is fast becoming a great favourite, and, like every other Finch-like bird in some of our larger shows, is provided with a class for his own species, while in others he has to compete with the Siskin and Twite. Some perfect specimens have of late years been put down. At the last Palace show some real flyers were on exhibition, and really good birds had to take a back seat. Age with this bird, as with most others, greatly improves it, the colour becoming richer, particularly on the breast and back.

In selecting an exhibition specimen, size, as in most other species, is a great point. The back and wing markings should be prominent and well-defined, and the bib under the chin should be large and clean-cut, and free from greyness. Try to check your bird from the bad habit of climbing on the wires of its show cage, as many good birds have been passed by the judge through this, the latter being unable to properly examine the bird when in this position. A good plan I find to prevent this unseemly, though natural, habit is by the use of a sheet of glass fixed against the cage front and kept in use for a month at least. After this your disorderly prisoner

should behave himself and hop from perch to perch, as you desire he should do.

Attractive Qualities. He is brimful of them. I know nothing detrimental as a general cage bird, for he has a sweet little song, plenty of cheek, and into the bargain as lively as a cricket from daylight to dark. Many people train him to draw his water in a thimble and open a small box for his seed. This I have never done myself; I prefer to leave it to others.

Twite

Linota flavirostris (Linnæus).



The property of Mr. H. J. CHICK, of Nottingham.

TWITE

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five and a half inches; bill short, almost conical, of a yellowish-horn colour; crown of head, neck and back dark brown, most of the feathers being edged with a lighter brown; rump red; wing and tail quills dark brown, edged with dirty white on outer webs; round lower mandible and below the eyes light red; sides of head dark brown, edged with light brown; chin, throat, breast and sides cinnamon brown; belly and under tail coverts dirty white; upper tail coverts dark brown.

The female is less bright in all body covering and lacks the red that adorns the male.

Habitation. Generally to be found on the hill and mountain sides, where heather, ling, and furze abound; more numerous in the North of England, Scotland and Ireland.

Nest and Eggs. The nest, which is composed of grass, stems, roots, moss and wool, with sometimes a lining of hair or feathers, is generally built amongst heather, gorse, or furze, sometimes in bushes and hedges. Four to six eggs are laid, similar to those of the Linnet, pale greenish-blue, spotted with brown, principally on the larger end with intermingling of red. Time: May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. Away on the hill and mountain sides in the North of these Islands, where other birds of song are not numerous, the Twite, or Mountain Linnet, makes his home, and in the Springtime, just before breeding commences, he is to be seen at his best, with his red rump and cinnamon chest, flitting from place to place, and his little mate in close pursuit.

It is a pleasing sight to see him perched on some light twigs of heather that is being swayed by the wind singing his sweet melody to the best of his power.

In the Winter they move further south, and may be seen in small flocks in the Midland and Western counties often in company with other birds of the Finch tribe, returning to their breeding haunts early in March.

Catching. No better way can be adopted than that of the use of clap nets; in fact it is generally caught with other birds, such as Greenfinches, Chaffinches, Linnets, etc., when the catcher goes forth for a mixed bag.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. Treat exactly the same as the Linnet, with plenty of grasses and green food when obtainable, and your bird should do well.

Hand Rearing. I do not see the necessity of this, as the Twite generally takes readily to captivity; in fact I have found him as easy as any to steady providing, of course, that kindness is meted out to him and his wants supplied.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird the Twite is fast becoming a favourite, and at many shows to-day liberal classification is allowed for him and his kinsmen, the Siskin and Redpoll, and at the Crystal Palace a class is put on for him alone.

In selecting an exhibition specimen it is necessary to obtain a bird of good size, rich in all colourings, particularly on the sides of the body. The back markings should be clear in definition and free from blurrs, the whole finished with a good polish, which greatly enhances the colours.

Attractive Qualities. In the Twite you have a singer, a friend, and an exhibition bird. I admit his song is not equal to that of the Linnet, it being of a shriller note and not of the variance, but none the less it is a pleasing discord. He is almost as bright a little chap as you could wish for, notwithstanding his dusky garb, ever on the alert, and as contented with his little lot as we ourselves could wish to be. I have had at least eighteen or twenty in my time and I must admit I have never yet had a tyrant among them, although I have on one or two occasions heard of fanciers who have had them to sulk for weeks after being caught but ultimately settling down in peace and quietness.

Hawfinch Hen

Coccothraustes vulgaris (Pallas).



The property of Mr. H. J. CHICK, of Nottingham.

HAWFINCH

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about seven and a half inches; short nearly conical bill, very thick at the base, of a pale horn colour in Winter and bluish in Summer; head cinnamon-brown; neck ash-brown; back and smaller wing coverts chestnut-brown; middle wing coverts white; primaries black, with bluish gloss; rump and upper tail coverts cinnamon-brown; tail feathers black, edged with white; round eyes and base of beak and throat black; breast and belly fawnish-grey; vent and undertail coverts white.

The female is smaller in size, and less bright in colour, and not so perfect in markings as the male.

Habitation. Generally met with in all counties of England and Wales, though not by any means plentiful. I have met with it in Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Cheshire, also on two occasions in mid-Wales.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is generally built in fir, fruit and holly trees, although I have found it in hawthorn bushes some ten feet from the ground. It is generally composed of fibrous roots, twigs, grass and lichens, lined with finer grass or roots and sometimes hair. It is generally a very loose structure, in fact almost transparent, when built in bushes or on branches of trees. Time: May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. In most of the counties throughout England and Wales the Hawfinch is more or less plentiful, but is seldom seen perhaps, for he is not one that rambles along the hedgerow; he prefers a more lofty and inconspicuous position in the top of the trees of plantations and woods. Yet again he cannot be discerned by his song, for, although he has a sweet little melody of his own, it is far too faint to be heard at any distance, and his call note is not so powerful in sound as that of a sparrow, and only consists of a squeak-like noise.

So if you are to find him, my friend, you must use your eyes and not your ears, as you do in most other instances in searching for birds. You cannot possibly mistake him if you see him, for his clumsy hop from branch to branch is quite in keeping with his unseemly bill.

Ask the cottage gardener if he knows him, and you may rest assured if there is any in the neighbourhood the latter will know it to his disgust if he has any green peas fit to pick, for it is among this favourite vegetable that he plays a most disastrous game. Not content with filling his crop, and probably those of his young as well, he will often set to and pick the remainder and leave them on the ground, and what the owner says on walking round to admire the progress his peas are making can far better be imagined than written herein.

Apart from this I know nothing against him, but more often than not this transgression alone will cost him his life.

It is a treat in the Autumn, when the hawberries are ripe, to watch this bird on a bush. He will take one after another, most carefully peeling away the flesh with his beak, only to obtain the minute stone in the centre, which he cracks with the greatest of ease, and winks his intelligent eyes as he swallows the kernel. The ground below is one mass of the fleshy part of those berries which have been discarded as unfit for his lordship's crop.

Catching. There is but one way I consider practical for the taking of this bird, and that is with limed twigs and a call bird. It may possibly be taken by means of a trap cage with call bird below and baited with sunflower and hemp seed, or a few hawberries. Be careful you don't let your bird go when once taken, for in handling he will be sure to pinch your fingers with his enormous bill to the full power of his jaws, introducing himself to you in this way.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. Generally speaking, in early life this bird is a bit of a tyrant, and if great care is not taken he will soon become such a wreck that you, dear reader, will wonder what is best to be done with him. However, if you are gentle and kind and provide him with a plentiful supply of good food he will well repay you for your trouble and anxiety, but a deal of patience is necessary, and not too close a friendship must be expected at first, for I can assure you that he is one that is a long time in making friends, but when he does do he is "thine for ever."

Now as to practical work. Place in a cage not less than 18 inches long and 11 inches wide, and a foot high. Keep front covered with a cloth some half-way down for at least a week, and gradually raise it until quite off; by this means he should get used to your presence. Offer him mealworms and live food daily, as this is a great necessity, and as a staple food you will find sunflower seed unsurpassed. He is very partial to hawberries, from which he will strip off the whole of the flesh to obtain the small nut in the middle; he is also very fond of green peas, and a small piece of ripe apple is not amiss to him. As a change to the sunflower you will find him eat buckwheat, hemp and canary seed, and I have found him also very fond of oats, and barley once in a way.

When moulting provide plenty of water for bathing purposes, and keep your bird out of draughts, as he is most susceptible to colds, which often prove fatal.

Hand Rearing. I do not consider this bird suitable for hand rearing for more reasons than one, and I much prefer a bird that has been reared in his natural haunts, as invariably they are far more robust in health and greater in size than those that are reared by hand.

Exhibiting. In selecting an exhibition specimen go for one of great size, not too stumpy in form, but of medium length; the black feathers at the chin, commonly called the bib, should be evenly cut and come to a fine point at the bottom; the wing bars clear and free from blackness; erect in carriage and uncrossed wings; general

colourings should be of the brightest possible shade, the cinnamon-brown on head and neck showing well cut. Steadiness is a great necessity in all Hawfinches put down for exhibition.

Generally speaking, there is nothing that will beat a good specimen of this variety in the A.O.V. hardbill classes, although I have known it stand down to a good Yellow or Cirl Bunting.

Of course really good Hawfinches are very hard to get, although some magnificent specimens have been in evidence the last four years at our more important shows.

Attractive Qualities. Some writers say this bird has no song, but I cannot really agree, for I had one that sang as sweet a song as one could wish for, and one would hardly believe it came from so great a bird—so sweet, so mellow and of wonderful variation. I admit this bird was wonderfully tame, in fact I could handle him without his knighting me with his beak on my finger.

Taking him all the way round, I call him an extremely handsome bird, easy to cater for, and most affectionate to its keeper.

Yellow Bunting

Emberiza citrinella (Linnæus).



The property of the AUTHOR.

YELLOW BUNTING

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about seven inches; bill short, conical shape and strong; head and nape of neck bright yellow, lined and streaked with dark olive green and black; back dark brown, intermittently marked with bright chestnut; wing quills dusky brown, bordered with yellow; rump bright chestnut; tail quills black, edged with yellow in the centre, and white on the two outer feathers; throat and upper breast yellow; lower breast, belly and under tail coverts bright yellow, the lower breast being mottled with pale chestnut, and the sides streaked with the same colour.

Female: Rather smaller than the male, and decidedly paler in colour on back and breast.

Habitation. Generally common throughout these Islands in grass tracts, arable lands, and other suitable localities.

Nest and Eggs. The former is generally placed on or near the ground in rank grass, at the sides of hedge rows, in low thorns and bushes. I have seen it at the foot of withy stumps, and many times in the osier beds on the side of the Severn. It is generally composed of dried grass, moss and fine roots, with lining of finer grass, and sometimes hair.

Five eggs are the general number, of a dirty purplish-white, veined, streaked, and spotted all over with a dark purplish-brown. They vary sometimes in colouration, some being decidedly lighter than others. Time: May June and July.

Countryside Notes. This bird is undoubtedly one of the most striking of our countryside, for his yellow head and breast, chestnut back and rump, are most conspicuous as he sits on the leafless brambles in the winter time, when all the earth is wrapped in its long winter sleep. It is then that he does abundance of good for the landowner by devouring millions of worthless seeds, etc., for he is a most diligent searcher, and will often scratch the ground with his beak to find the necessary tit-bits required, hence save the ground from being over-run with various rank weeds when Spring returns.

As early as April he settles down to domestic duties, under some friendly withy stump, in rank grass at the side of the hedge, or in the hedge itself.

It certainly cannot be said that he is an artist at nest construction, none the less he is an excellent parent and mate; for hours he will sit in close proximity of his little home, singing his short but not unpleasant song, and constantly waiting upon and attending to the wants of his better half, who is busy with the incubation of the eggs.

In the middle of July, when other birds are silent owing to the moult having set in, and not even the Chaffinch is heard, our little friend is sure to be seen,

perched on the dead limb of some oak, or other tree, trying to brighten up the countryside which, at this season, is conspicuous by the absence of song after the most beautiful and varied melodies we have heard all through the Spring and Summer.

Yes, for nearly an hour at a time I have heard him making the best of his vocal powers, which consist of, as near as possible, a little bit of bread and no c-h-e-e-s-e repeated again and again until he darts down into the field below to secure some dainty morsel that has caught his intelligent eye.

Catching. No one, I think, goes on purpose to capture Yellow Buntings, but they are generally caught with other Finch-like birds in the harder days of Winter with the clap nets.

Steadying, meteing off and General Feeding. The first named is a somewhat difficult task as this bird is of a very wild nature when first caught. I advise you to keep him in a box cage similar to that recommended as an ordinary stock cage, and cover up the front for a day or so, gradually removing the covering as the time goes on. If possible, keep the bird in the living room, as this will greatly tend to hasten matters.

Feed on a good stock mixture containing hemp, canary, rape and linseed, with a few mealworms each day, and a little insectivorous food if he will eat it.

Hand Rearing. I do not consider this worth while.

Exhibiting. Like all other birds, there are good and bad Yellow Buntings as far as exhibition specimens are concerned, and a good Yellow Bunting is worth its weight in gold as an exhibition specimen. There is no bird I know but the Hawfinch that can beat a good bird of this variety, and often the latter has to stand down if the Bunting happens to be an exceptionally good one.

In an exhibition specimen the premier points are perhaps the head markings which should be clear and well defined, forming a distinct V shape from the forehead to the back of the skull, another clearly defined mark should extend from behind the eye downwards, curving upwards again at the front, but for this the whole of the head should be as free from markings of any kind as possible, and be of the brightest of yellows. The back should be well marked of the richest shades of chestnut brown, the breast and belly bright yellow, the lower part of the former needs to be nicely mottled with rich chestnut brown. Size and condition, of course, are two great items. Withal, steadiness is essential.

Attractive Qualities. Take him all the way round when once steadied down, he is a handsome and fairly docile little gentleman, fairly easy to satisfy by way of diet and by no means a dirty bird.

I have had many in my time, and the greatest trouble I found with them was the difficulty in gaining their confidence and getting them to sing, the latter is rather a rare occurrence in a cage. Yet he is forever chatting as he hops from perch to perch.

Corn Bunting

Emberiza miliaria (Linnæus).



'The property of Mr. H. J. CHICK, Nottingham.

CORN BUNTING

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about seven and a half inches; beak short and conical, of a yellow and horn colour; head, neck, back and upper tail coverts light olive-brown, streaked with dark brown; wings dark brown, the feathers being edged with a lighter shade; tail forked and dark brown in colour; throat, chest and the whole of under parts greyish-brown; neck, breast and sides spotted like a Thrush, with dark brown.

Female similar, but smaller and less brilliant in the shades of the various browns.

Habitation. Generally found throughout these Islands, particularly in England and the South of Scotland and Ireland. In the Spring and Summer I have seen him in the meadows in company with Pipits and Larks, often on the top of some high bush or tree, singing his song, which only consists of about four notes, repeated again and again.

Many times he has been mistaken for the Thrush, as, but for his shorter tail and beak, he is not unlike his distant relative.

Nest and Eggs. Built of coarse grass and roots and lined with finer grass, the nest is generally placed on or near the ground. I have found it in clover and wheat fields, railway banks and on pasture land. Five eggs are

generally the number laid, of a pale purple colour, spotted and streaked with dark purplish-brown with a shading of grey. Time: May, June and July.

Country Notes. As the name implies, this bird is partial to arable lands, particularly corn and clover fields. It is more often seen than people think for, but having nothing conspicuous, either by song or dress, it is not noticed by the average man. I have seen large quantities in the fields in the West of England, but not so many in the North, where I should think it is somewhat scarce. He seems very partial, like most of the Bunting family, to a conspicuous spot to perch, as invariably he occupies some dead branch or telegraph wire, and here it is he makes the most of his song, which consists of about four notes, uttered again and again.

Catching. But for the few that fall a prey to the Linnet and Goldfinch catcher by chance, I think none are caught with any intention of keeping it in confinement, and I cannot recommend anyone to spend time and trouble on it.

Meteing off and Steadying. This I don't think has ever been attempted, at least I have never heard of it being done, and I am sure I should not waste time on such a bird.

General Feeding. Being partly insectivorous, it is most necessary to supply live food for this bird if you are

to keep it in health. You will find him fond of spiders, caterpillars, grasshoppers, small beetles and mealworms. For seed you cannot do better than that recommended for the Greenfinch, not forgetting a few crushed oats.

Hand Rearing. This I do not recommend as the bird is not worth it.

Exhibiting. Very rarely do we see this bird on the show bench, by reason of the fact that they resist captivity to the extreme of their power, and often beat themselves almost beyond recognition if kept in a cage. I don't think I can speak of him as a suitable bird to try your hand at, either for exhibition or aviary purposes.

Attractive Qualities. But for an occasional exhibition specimen you may get I cannot see any attraction in this bird, for its song is not so long as its tail, its plumage is dull and coarse, and, lastly, it is hard to tame for either cage or aviary life.

Cirl Bunting

Emberiza cirlus (Linnæus).



CIRL BUNTING

Description of Parent Birds. Male : Length about six and a half inches; short conical bill of bluish colour; line of sulphur yellow extends from the base of the upper mandible over the eye, encircling the ear coverts and under the throat, likewise one from the beak under the eye, crown of head from eye and under lower streak, olive brown and black; head and nape and sides of neck dark olive green; throat black; back rich chestnut-brown and olive; wings dirty black, edged with brown and green; upper tail coverts olive and streaked with grey; quills brown tinged with white; breast and sides olive brown with chestnut band; belly and tail coverts dirty yellow.

The female is smaller and less brilliant in all colours than the male, and is lacking the bright stripes on the head and throat, the latter being cinnamon, instead of black.

Habitation. Generally local in its habits, more in some districts than in others, mostly inhabiting wild and uncultivated tracks in the South and West of England and Wales.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is generally found in brambles and furze, rarely in hedges, sometimes on the ground. It is composed of roots, moss and dried grass, with lining of hair or feathers.

Five eggs are generally laid of a dull bluish white, spotted and streaked with very dark brown and under-markings of grey. Time: May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. The Cirl Bunting is without question one of the most beautiful birds that adorn our countryside, for the variety of colouring, so charmingly set out by Nature, makes him an object of great interest to look upon. Unfortunately it is rarely met in the Midlands and northern counties of England and Wales, but why this should be the case I leave to a better pen than mine to tell.

I have met it in company of Yellow Buntings, Bramblefinches, and Linnets, in the Winter time round the rickyards, and when resting on the top, or sloping roof of a barn covered with snow, the height of its beauty is most conspicuous. In Summer it is practically insectivorous, feeding for the most part on grasshoppers, earwigs, worms, etc., and in the Autumn on seedling heads of obnoxious weeds and plants. Like all the Bunting family, it has no song worth speaking of, but what little it has, is generally given forth from some dead limb of an oak or elm tree, although I have seen it singing on a milestone by the roadside.

Catching. I think no one makes a purpose effort for the catching of this bird, and what few are caught, are generally taken in the clap nets.

Meteing off and Steadying. I think I cannot do better than recommend you the same treatment in this case,

as in the matter of the Yellow Bunting, as I have found the method I have there set out, successful on three occasions when the birds have come in my possession.

General Feeding. The same as recommended for the Yellow Bunting would amply apply in this case, and if strictly followed, should prove successful.

Hand Rearing. This I have never tried, and cannot say I intend to do, but I think if taken at ten days old and constantly fed on plenty of live food, such as recommended in general feeding, together with soaked or scalded rape, dried in a cloth, and mixed with a portion of hard boiled yolk of egg, success should follow.

Exhibiting. I know nothing that I fancy more for an A.O.V. hardbill class, than a really fine specimen of this variety of Bunting if shown in a cage enamelled a bright emerald green, your bird steady, and in nice condition, it is pretty sure to be in the first three. In selecting a show specimen size is a great item, but steadiness, as in all Buntings, is the great factor.

All yellow markings should be well and evenly defined, and free from streakiness or black feathers, the black on the throat and chin should be evenly cut, and free from greyness, wings carried well into the sides, and not crossed at the tips.

Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus (Linnæus).



REED BUNTING

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six inches; bill short, conical, and straight; head and chin black; round the neck a white band extends, varying in depth from a mere streak to $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch; a white line also extends from the lower mandible; nape of neck, back, wing, and upper tail coverts chestnut-brown, highly variegated with black and grey; wing and tail quills dusky brown, the former bordered with a chestnut-brown, and the latter on the outer edge with white; breast, belly, and underparts white, tinged and streaked with light brown.

The female is somewhat smaller, and has not got the jet-black head and white collar, the former and latter are of a tawny hue.

Habitation. Generally common throughout these Islands where large ponds, lakes, and swamps, surrounded by rushes and reeds.

Nest and Eggs. The former is nearly always to be found among the sedges, rushes, and weeds in marshy lands, at the sides of ponds and other suitable localities, I have found it fairly abundant in the osier beds on the banks of the Severn and Avon. It is composed of dried grass and moss with lining of hair and other soft materials. Five eggs are generally laid, of a purplish-

grey colour, mottled and spotted over the whole of the surface with rich dark brown. Time: May, June, and July.

Countryside Notes. Found as he is in marshy swamps, and kindred places; the Reed Bunting is a pretty little chap when in full Summer garb; his jet-black head, his nice white collar, and back of many hues of brown, make him a most pleasing sight to look upon, when perched on some withy cane, reed stem, or twig. Certainly he has not an over pleasing, or particularly long song, but none the less, it is a pleasant little ditty, and free from that which is generally characteristic of the Bunting family.

Generally speaking he is not of a wandering nature, but is satisfied to abide in his own quarters Winter and Summer, unless he gets frost-bound, and is compelled by sheer starvation to seek fresh quarters. In this case he will often throw off his unsociable airs, and join in the throng of other Finch-like birds and Buntings, duly to return again to his dear old haunts when climatic conditions will allow.

Catching. There is undoubtedly no better way to go about this than by a means of a limed twig, placed where the bird frequents, and a close watch kept for his alighting on it.

Meteing off, Steadying, and General Feeding. Carry out that which is recommended for the Yellow variety, and your bird should do well. You will find him particularly fond of grub and insect life.

Hand Rearing. I don't recommend it. It is not worth the time and trouble necessary.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird the Reed Bunting is very smart, and if a good specimen, is often well up in the cards, although being a rather common bird, he has to invariably stand down, for rarer, not to say more beautiful varieties.

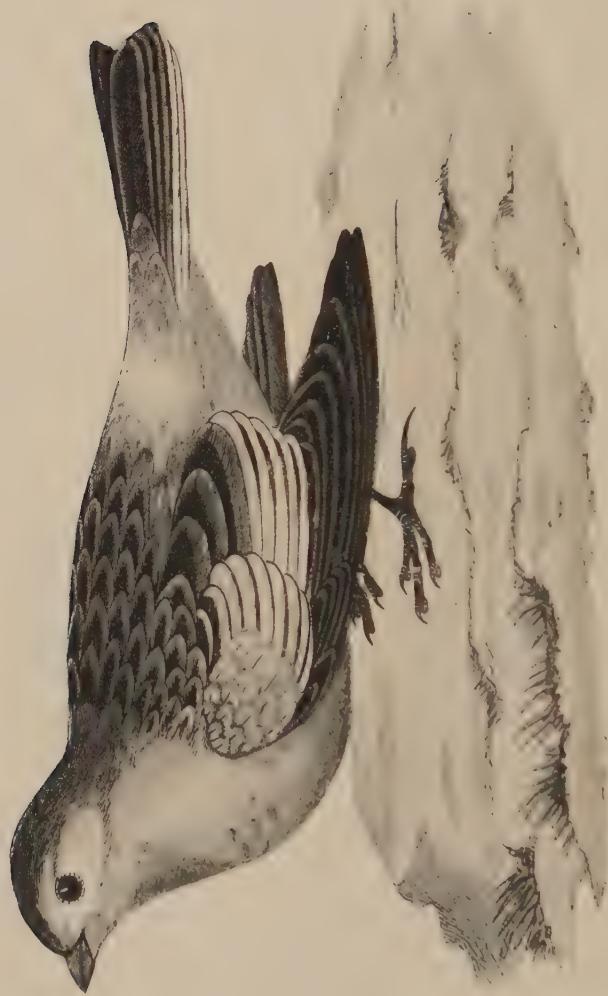
In an exhibition specimen, you need a bird of good size, taking the perch well, nice broad white collar, and jet-black head; back needs to be of the richest hues of light and dark browns, well polished, and the bird on the whole nice and steady.

Attractive Qualities. But for his somewhat wild and nervous nature when fresh caught, he is a most pleasing and perky little fellow. I have had several at one time and another, and have always found them hardy and distinctly sociable, when once used to your presence and person. He is very fond of fighting your fingers if placed between the cage wires, with crest erect, uttering a curious little twitter the whole time.

By all means I can recommend him as a cage bird when the one difficulty named has been got over.

Snow Bunting

Plectrophenax nivalis (Linnæus).



SNOW BUNTING

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length seven inches; short black conical bill; head and neck white, slightly speckled with black; back black; rump and upper tail coverts white, slightly marked with brown; wings black on shoulders, centres white, and black on the lower half and ends; tail forked, black and brown in the middle, white on sides; throat, breast, belly, vent, and under tail coverts snow white.

Female: Smaller than male, the white throughout it not so clear, being marked with black and brown.

Habitation. Generally speaking, it is only a Winter visitor to these Islands, but it has been known to breed on the hills and mountains in the North of Scotland and the Orkney and Shetland Islands. It generally arrives late in the Autumn and is fairly plentiful in the fields, and on the coast, especially in the more Northerly parts of England and Scotland.

Nest and Eggs. I am sorry to say it has never fell to my luck to come across a nest of this beautiful bird, therefore I cannot describe it to you.

Catching. I know only one way that is at all practicable in the catching of these birds, and that is the use of clap nets with call bird set in the localities where they

frequent. Although they have many times been caught in singles, and small numbers, in company with other species, with which they associate.

Meteing off, Steadying, and General Feeding. You cannot do better than the method recommended for the Yellow Bunting, adding a little crushed oats to the bill of fare.

Hand Rearing. I do not consider this bird worth the trouble attending hand-rearing, let alone the fact, the improbability of obtaining one; however, should you do so, I think you will find him thrive if given a food, consisting of equal parts of hard-boiled egg and soaked ants' eggs, to which add half the quantity of crushed hemp.

Exhibiting. I cannot well recommend this bird for the show bench, after the first moult in cage or aviary, for it is a singular thing, that it never retains its snow-like beauty in confinement, but becomes very patchy with a blackish-brown tint, particularly on the head and wings. It is a bird that has its greatest purity of colour in its younger days, and if you can secure a good specimen, it should have a successful run for one season, if you can steady him in time for the show dates. In seeking an exhibition specimen, look for a bird of great size; broad as possible across the chest; wings compact, and carried well into the sides; the back, shoulders, and

black in wings and tail should be of the deepest possible steel-blue black.

Attractive Qualities. As I have mentioned above, I cannot recommend this bird for exhibition, and as a singer, I cannot say I have ever heard its song, with the exception of a continual tinkling noise.

In the aviary it is a sociable bird with other varieties, but I think you can see him best when wild, in the meadows, and on the shore.

Black Redstart

Ruticilla titys (Scopoli).



The property of Mr. C. T. MAXWELL, Brixton, S.W.

BLACK REDSTART

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five and a quarter inches; bill straight and medium length; crown of head, nape of neck, back, and wing coverts deep bluish-grey; wing quills black, shading to brown on the inner web, and white on the outer web; upper tail coverts, tail quills, and under tail coverts bright rusty-red on the outer sides, and the same, tinged with brown in the middle; over the forehead, and the lower part of the head and neck, jet-black; breast and belly jet-black, slightly frosted with white on the lower part of the chest.

I have never had the pleasure of seeing a female of this variety, so cannot describe it.

Habitation. This beautiful bird appears at intervals in the Autumn, very small numbers, only touching this Country, I believe, in course of migration to the South.

Nest and Eggs. As this bird has not been known to me to breed in this country, I cannot give details.

Countryside Notes. I have only once had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of this little chap in the wild state, and that was at the foot of the Malvern hills in the early autumn of 1901. A friend of mine wrote and told me there was one about there, and I took train next day

to try and see if I could get a glimpse of it. I found my friend, and we went in search round about where he had seen it, and it was some considerable time before we caught sight of him. When we did he was perched on the outer limb of an old plum tree that hung over a pig-cote. I set the limed twig to try and capture him, but he was equal to the occasion and went off across to the gorse on the Common, and that was the last we saw of him.

Catching. You cannot do better than use the net trap I spoke of for the catching of the Nightingale. I should have used it, but I didn't know of such a thing at that time; bait with a mealworm, and you should not be long in capturing him.

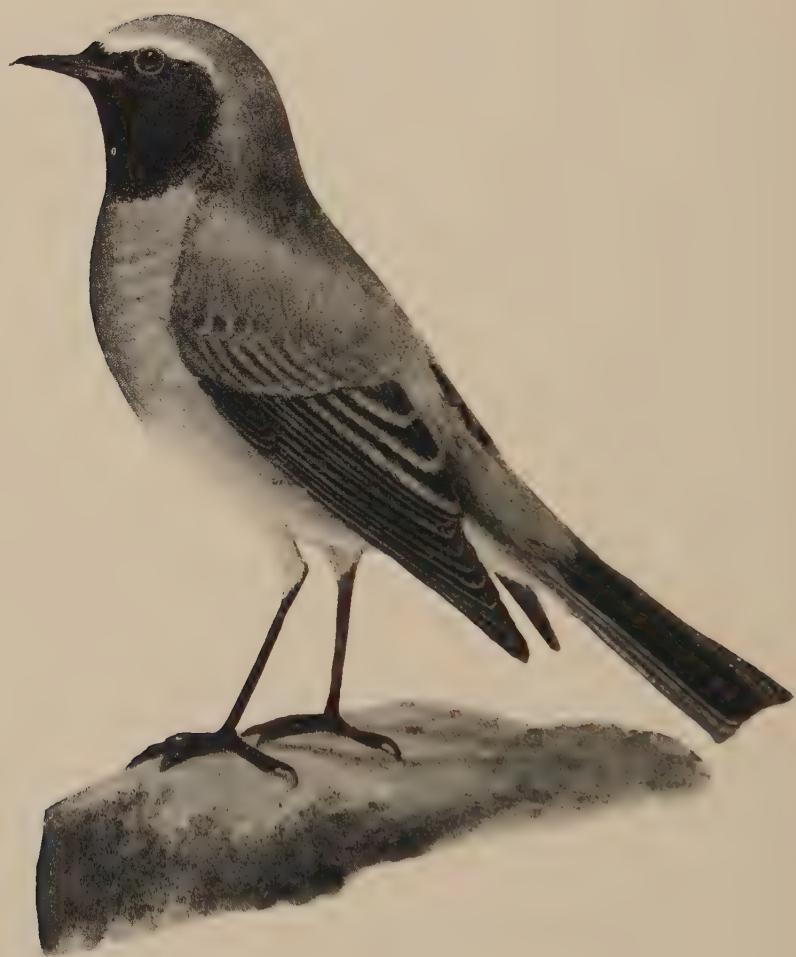
Meteing off, Steadying, and General Feeding. Carry out the same instructions given for the Nightingale, with the addition of a few house-flies when obtainable, also plenty of scalded gentles.

Exhibiting. In recent years there has been several excellent specimens of this bird to be seen at our shows. Wonderfully successful they are, and right well they should be, not because they are a rarity altogether, but because of their beauty, and the difficulty in keeping them in good health and feather. It is needless, I think, for me to point out what is necessary for a good specimen, as it is only too difficult to get one at all. If you ever have the good luck to do so, I hope "dame fortune" will attend you.

Attractive Qualities. But for the fact that he is somewhat a tedious bird to keep in good health and condition, he is all that can be desired as a cage bird. The one I have been exhibiting this season is a very fine specimen, but, like many others of his species, has lost two claws, and it is difficult to say how this sad state of affairs comes about; but it seems quite a common occurrence with the Redstart family. They are certainly very apt to get their feet in a very clogged condition if not frequently cleaned out, and it may be from this that the trouble arises.

Common Redstart

Ruticilla phoenicurus (Linnæus).



The property of Mr. H. J. CHICK, of Nottingham.

COMMON REDSTART

Description of Parent Birds. Male: length about five and quarter inches; bill straight and medium length; forehead silvery white; crown of head, nape of neck, back and wings coverts bluish-grey, wing quills black tinged with brown; outer tail quills bright rusty red; centre tail quills rusty red tinged with brown, extending from above the upper mandible, and under the white streak on the forehead; round the sides of head and chin black; breast bright rusty red, slightly frosted at the lower part; belly pale rusty red, shading to nearly white at the vent; under tail coverts red.

The female is devoid of the black on the face, and the "frost" on the forehead. The whole of the upper parts are of a lighter shade, and tinged with brown; tail and underparts are less brilliant.

Habitation. Generally well distributed throughout England and Wales, in the valleys and flats, particularly where rough and uncut hedges abound.

Nest and Eggs. The Redstart invariably builds his nest in a hole of a tree, but I have known it in a crevice of a stone wall, and also in a pigstye. It generally consists of dried grass and roots, sometimes leaves and is lined with hair or feathers.

Often as many as six or seven eggs are laid of a

bright bluish-green, free from markings of any kind
Time : May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. This handsome bird is not one of the earliest of our Spring visitors to arrive. It was the second day of May before I saw it in 1906, and on the 28th of April in 1907. In Gloucestershire on both occasions.

He is a bird that is not long in letting you know he has come, for let him be at the top of an Elm tree or on a whithy stump, his shrill "otwit" is distinctly heard for many yards. It is rather singular, but I have found this bird particularly nervous when he first arrives, and he always seems to give you a very wide berth, but as time moves on, and he settles down to domestic duties, he gets more genteel, or perhaps daring, for when he is feeding his little mate, and young, although he stands and watches you for some time before entering the nesting site, he is not afraid to proceed after some hesitation.

It is an exceedingly pretty sight to see an adult male sat on the hedge of a new mown hayfield when the sun is shining, turning his head first on one side and then the other, watching for the various insects that have been disturbed; every now and then his bright red tail quivering away as if on a spring, presently he sees what he requires, and darts down, secures it, and is back again on the same twig in a remarkably short space of time.

Catching. The elliptical net trap is excellent for this bird, and if set some three feet from the hedge where the bird was seen, baited with a mealworm, you will soon secure your quarry. I have caught a large number in this way.

Steadying, Meteing off, and General Feeding. Follow the instructions given in the case of the Nightingale, with the addition of a few house and blue bottle flies and your bird should do well.

Hand Rearing. I have reared many nests by the same means as recommended for the Nightingale, with the addition of a few wingless house flies each day.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird he is a grand little fellow, and scores many a popular win in strong competition. There is no doubt that his gay plumage and quivering tail go a great way to carry him through. During the present Show season, some very fine specimens have been on exhibition, and right well have they upheld the honour of a handsome family. In selecting an exhibition specimen, get one as stout in build as possible, well frosted on the forehead and chest, the red in the tail and chest to be as bright as possible, and the whole of the upper parts a rich bluish-grey. Condition and steadiness are great features with this bird, particularly the latter, as he is apt to be rather nervous when first in a show cage.

Attractive Qualities. Like many other of our native birds he is full of attractions, for not only is he one of our brightest in plumage, but he has many pretty ways when once he gets used to his keeper and steadies down. I have had many in my time, and I have always found them agreeable cage pets in every way, although perhaps he has a failing in the fact that it is very difficult to keep his feet and toes in order, but the remedy mentioned in the latter end of this work invariably sets things right.

Wheatear

Saxicola œnanthe (Linnæus).



WHEATEAR

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six inches; bill fairly long, straight, and stiff; crown of head, nape of neck, and back bluish-grey, slightly tinged with brown on rump; rump and upper tail coverts white, outer tail quills white, inner ditto black; a large black pear-shaped patch, varying in size with different specimens, extends from the base of the beak, round the eye and encircling the ear coverts; a line of white encircles the forehead, passes round over the top of the black streak mentioned previously; chin, throat, breast, and belly pale yellow.

Female: The female is easily distinguished from the male, being far less brilliant in colour and not so well defined in markings.

Nest and eggs. The former is for the most part built, either in old stone walls, in stacks of stone, in quarries, sometimes in disused rabbit holes, and I have known it on two occasions under the projecting portion of a rock, in the grassy slopes of the hillside.

The materials used are mostly dried roots, grass, and moss, lined with wool or hair, sometimes, but rarely, feathers. It is of a very loose structure and very carelessly laid together. Five eggs are the general clutch, of a pale bluish-green, free from spots or markings of any kind, although a friend in the West of England told

me he found a nest on Cleeve Common with slight markings on the eggs of a reddish hue. Time: April, May and June.

Habitation. As a Spring migrant it is generally found throughout the British Isles, it frequents stony and mountainous places, particularly in the vicinity of quarries and stone workings. It arrives early in April and departs in September.

Countryside Notes. Often before the frosts, that wrap our countryside in a mantle of white, have ceased to show themselves, the Wheatear arrives on our shores.

A truly beautiful bird is he, ever full of grace and comeliness, the picture of health, and one would hardly credit that he had travelled over vast tracks of sea and land, to spend the days of our only too short a Summer with us.

See him as he sits on a fence or gate-post, with his tail for ever partly spread and waving up and down, showing distinctly his pure white rump, at the same time his intelligent eye ever on the look out for some passing fly or insect, which for the most part are what he exists on.

It is said by many writers that the males come first, but I cannot say that I have noticed any distinction at the time of migration, yet I admit that the two sexes often keep together in separate flocks for some little time after arrival.

It is a study indeed to see a male "making up" to his wife that is to be, ever bowing and spreading his

tail, following here and there wherever she chooses to go. Having once got the better of her affections, he is as busy as can be in selecting a suitable site for a nesting place and nursery to rear their young, which for the most part is most difficult to find if a constant watch is not kept on the parent birds.

Having once settled down, and his little lady busy incubating the eggs, he keeps a most constant watch in the vicinity, and is often inclined to break into song, so proud is he of his little home and wife.

After gleaning in the sunshine from some rail or post, he spots a spider or similar insect, down he goes seizing the dainty morsel with the greatest apparent satisfaction, uttering immediately afterwards his well-known "war cry," "clack, clack."

Having reared perhaps two nests of young and left them to look after themselves, he prepares for migration towards the end of August, by flocking with others of his species on our Southern coast and moors.

Catching. The best way of snaring this bird is perhaps by means of a limed rush or very fine twig, placed flat on the post or fence where the bird has been seen to often alight; having done this, gently drive the bird in the direction of the snare and no difficulty should follow.

Meteing off, Steadying, and General Feeding. I have always met with great success in treating this bird identically the same way as recommended for the

Nightingale. Although I have only had about a dozen fresh caught ones through my hands, I am pleased to say I have only lost one through not taking the food I recommend.

Hand Rearing. I really did not consider these birds are worth this amount of trouble, for if a fair amount of care and caution is used, the adult is not at all difficult to steady and mete off.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird the Wheatear has very few equals. Like his two near relatives, the Whinchat and Stonechat, their beautiful colours blending magnificently against the pale blue background of the show cage, their sweet action when hopping from perch to perch makes it a most difficult matter for a judge to pass them, if in nice condition and a good specimen.

In selecting one for exhibition, get the largest size possible, with good bold chest and head; tanned as richly as possible on the chest; good bold eye streak; and nice frosting on forehead.

Attractive Qualities. As a cage bird the Wheatear has many admirers, but, unfortunately, like many other soft-billed birds, is very apt to suffer from swollen feet, and even lose toe-nails. As a consequence, I have dealt somewhat lengthily on this matter in another part of the work, to which I would refer the reader.

Unfortunately he has little or no song, but is none the less a most beautiful bird at all times to look upon.

Whinchat

Pratincola rubetra (Linnæus).



WHINCHAT

Description of Parent Birds. Male: length about five inches; bill short, straight and fairly stiff; crown of head, nape, back and smaller wing coverts chestnut-brown, and edged with a paler shade. Wings dark brown, the secondary flights being edged with buff; spurious wing white; upper tail coverts brown; tail quills white on the upper half, dark and light brown on the lower ditto. From the base of the upper mandible, round the eye and ear coverts, is a buffish white streak likewise one from the gape to the under part of the eye; chin and round under the ear coverts another streak extends; throat and chest pale chestnut-brown, shading to dirty white under the belly, vent and under tail coverts.

Female: similar to male but not nearly so distinctly marked or colouration so bright.

Habitation. Generally frequent the skirts of woods and the rougher of country where cover abounds, sometimes along the river banks and at the sides of railway tracks in suitable localities.

Nest and Eggs. The former is generally placed on or near the ground in rough stubble or grass lands, at the foot of clumps of gorse or heather and in the rank grass that abounds there, it generally consists of dried

grass and moss with lining of hair or wool. Five eggs are the general number, of a bright greenish blue, lightly spotted on the larger end with reddish-brown. Time: April, May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. Arriving in this country with our earliest migrants, this merry little chap seems ever on the alert, for if you meet him in his haunts in the open fields or low-lying grounds that surround woods, coppices or spinneys, you can but notice he is ever on the look out for both you and his quarrie.

Singular to relate you never meet him in company with his near relative the Stonechat; for while the latter is on the hills and among the quarries, the Whinchat is on the dales and flats.

I have seen this bird in the West of England very early in April, when the white frost was on the hedges, and although he did not appear to appreciate the cold snap he was not too cold, get up and be gone before I could get within twenty yards of him. One cannot but at all times be attracted to the spot where the Whinchat is for he is for ever uttering his call-note *u-tac u-tac*, which is not at all unlike that of the Stonechat if you do not happen to be at fairly close proximity. Soon after the arrival in these Islands they settle down to domestic duties and prepare their home under some friendly gorse or heather bush, or perhaps in a tuft of rank grass. During the whole time that incubation is going on, the male keeps in close attendance of his little mate, constantly making journeys to take some dainty grub to her

that has caught his eye while sat on some slender stem in the sunshine. When the young are hatched both parents work from morn till eve to feed their charges, and get them early away to look after themselves. As soon as they are able to do this they again settle down to rear their second brood.

Catching. There is no better way for the snaring of this bird than that mentioned in the case of the Stonechat; he is fairly easy if caution is used to cover the net well and keep from view yourself.

Follow out the instructions given for the Nightingale, noting at the same time the remarks made in the case of the Stonechat.

Hand Rearing. See Stonechat.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird providing the feet are alright and not lacking claws or nails, which is generally a great trouble with this bird in confinement, and the plumage is in nice condition, the Whinchat is a most popular little exhibit wherever he goes. I notice this year one or two excellent specimens have been shown, and have always been fairly well up in the money. I am pleased to see this for I am sure there is no more fascinating little chap than he for caged life or for exhibition.

In selecting an exhibition specimen size of course is a great item, nice broad chest, and the general body colour must be of the brightest. The streaks on the

side of the head need to be clearly defined and pure in colour. The crown of head and back needs to be thoroughly well and evenly laced with two distinct hues of brown. Withal general condition and steadiness are two most important items at all times.

Attractive Qualities. In the Whinchat, we have all that can be desired of a cage bird, his general attire being quite a study in itself, his pearly little song and pretty ways make him full of attraction to everyone.

As to docility, if treated with kindness he lacks nothing, in fact through his gluttonous little ways, he at times is apt to get far too steady, being often too fat to hop from perch to perch without apparent exertion.

Stonechat

Pratincola rubicola (Linnæus).



STONECHAT

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five inches; bill fairly stiff, medium length, and straight; head, nape, and back black, slightly edged with brown; rump and upper tail coverts white, streaked with brown and black; wing coverts black edged with brown, the centre of which are white forming a bar; wing quills dusky-brown; tail ditto black, edged with rusty-brown; chin and throat black; sides of neck white (forming a distinct collar); breast dark rusty-red; belly pale rust colour, shading much lighter towards the vent; under tail coverts white streaked with black.

Female: Head, nape, neck, and back dirty brown edged with light fawn; chin, chest, and sides of head dirty white; breast and belly pale brown.

Habitation. Generally found throughout the British Isles, on rough common and moorland ground, where furze and bramble grow, particularly in the neighbourhood of quarries and steep slopes.

Nest and Eggs. The former is generally placed on or near the ground at the foot of gorse or bramble bushes, and other rough growths. It is most difficult to locate unless a most constant watch is kept during incubation.

Materials generally used are moss, roots, dried grass, with lining of hair or feathers, sometimes finer stalks or blades of grass are used for the latter purpose. Five or

six eggs are the general number, of a light bluish-green, profusely spotted on the larger end with reddish-brown. Time : May, June, and July.

Countryside Notes. More often not as you make your way between the gorse and heather bushes on any of the hill or mountain sides of the British Isles, your ear will catch the peculiar sound of "*utick-utick*"; it is the call note of the Stonechat, from some outlying branch of one of the clumps of gorse or heather. If you stand and watch him through the binoculars, you will witness a pretty sight, particularly if the sun is shining; before you have waited long, a fly or similar insect will come within the range of his pert little eye, he turns his head on one side to watch it, and as it alights on some flower or leaf, he is off in pursuit, caught it, and settled again on another sprig, wiping his beak, and calling again.

Such a variety of colours on one bird, and so beautifully blended, it would be really hard to find, for his deep chestnut breast, black head and neck, white collar, and well spangled back, makes him at all times a treat to look upon, for not only is he so beautiful in colouring but he is for ever on the alert, and if you come within the range of his sight he will watch you with one eye, and his prey with the other.

Never seemingly dissatisfied, Winter or Summer, I have often wondered how he fares in some of the harder Winters, for although I have picked up many birds of various species, that have died through starvation and cold, I have never seen or heard of this handsome little fellow being a victim.

Catching. The most successful way I have found of taking this bird is with the elliptical net trap, similar to that recommended for the Nightingale, in this case a green caterpillar would be preferred to the mealworm, the trap must be set in close vicinity where the bird has been seen to frequent.

Meteing off, Steadying, and General Feeding. You cannot do better than carry out the instructions given for the Nightingale, with the addition of a few flies (live), and a good supply of scalded gentles each day when obtainable.

Hand Rearing. I have reared two nests in identically the same way that I have recommended for the Nightingale and they have done splendidly.

Exhibiting. Although it is very seldom seen at our shows, the Stonechat, if a good one, takes stopping in any competition. I have only seen it exhibited on about four occasions, but it has always done well and is certainly worth his keep for this purpose, which I am sorry to say few birds really are, that is from a financial point of view.

In selecting a show specimen, get one as stout in build as possible, with chest and back of the brightest of colouring; head of good black and well polished; the white collar round the neck needs to be well defined and as wide as possible; withal general polish and condition

are most important items for the successful exhibiting of the Stonechat.

Attractive Qualities. This little chap is far too seldom seen in captivity to suit the tastes of many ornithologists, he certainly has little or no song, but his grand array of colours and his amiable disposition, when he has once got used to you, make him all that can be desired as a cage bird.

Nightingale

Daulius luscinia (Linnæus).



The property of Mr. H. J. CHICK, of Nottingham.

NIGHTINGALE

Description of Parent Birds. Male: length about six inches; bill of medium length and nearly straight; head and upper portion of body a level nut brown; wings brown; tail rusty red; chin, throat, belly and vent dirty white, slightly tinged with brown on chest.

Female: rather smaller in size. It is sometimes very difficult to distinguish them.

Habitation. Fairly common throughout the Midland and Southern Counties of England and Wales, particularly in coppices, brakes and woods, where bracken abounds, sometimes in thick hedge rows and natural valleys.

Nest and Eggs. The nest, which is principally composed of dead grass and leaves (mostly oak) lined with moss or hair, is placed at the foot of trees and bushes, under ferns and bracken, but rarely in hedges. Five eggs are generally laid of an olive brown colour, free from markings of any kind. Time: May and June.

Countryside Notes. King of songsters is the name that this sweet bird is known by, and right well does he uphold it, for I really know nothing more melodious, and more ringing to the ear than the song of the Nightingale.

Many people think that the Nightingale is a scarcity, but South of Warwick, and bordering Gloucestershire on the West it is quite plentiful, particularly on the banks of the Warwickshire Avon, where it may be heard at almost any time in the Spring, after its arrival from the South. The song, commencing as it does with a brisk *Churr churr*, though not of long duration, is of such a wondrous warbling, that to be appreciated, it must be heard, for I have never been able to meet anyone that could describe it, to do duty to its singer.

People will go for miles to hear this sweet bird at night when the silvery moon is just rising behind the copse, and there he is as proud as ever, pouring forth his song of joy as if to say, that if he cannot be heard by day, he can by night, when all other birds are sleeping under the new Spring leaves.

Generally speaking he is a most pugnacious little fellow, and certainly seems to think that he can do pretty much as he likes. I well remember a pair that had taken possession of a small brake in the West of England, and before they settled down I frequently visited their domain to see they were there, and it was not long before they let me know it, for his lordship would flit to the outer edge, without any commotion, and rattle away his song for dear life, invariably uttering a *tack tack* immediately afterwards. If I followed him he would go a little further and repeat his song over again, and continue to do as long as he could see me, as much as to say I had no right there. Unless a wood or copse is of large acreage you will not find more

than one pair in it, and the same applies to all other nesting places that they fix up. One pair, one domain.

At Stratford-on-Avon I well remember finding a pair in a small coppice, and knowing the pugnacious nature of this bird I imitated his call as near as I could, from behind a tree, some twenty yards away. In less than five minutes he was on the top of the tree I was under, and in less time than it takes to tell, down below, only to find out I had made a fool of him. With a croaking noise that I took to be a scold, he fled back to the copse, a better and wiser bird.

I think it is a thousand pities so many are caught and sold year by year, to the inexperienced fanciers, who seem to think that a Nightingale will live on biscuit, ants' eggs at a shilling a pound, and flies likewise with a mealworm once a week. Instead of practising their hands on far less difficult, let alone charming birds, they must have a Nightingale, and after a very few days behind those wires he begins to see, that death, by gradual starvation, is awaiting him, and one morning, poor thing, you find him with his head under his wing, breathing heavily, any one of which may be his last.

I say leave them to increase their numbers, and be an adornment to our Country Side, if you cannot afford to do justice to your captive, for I must admit that the keeping of all soft billed birds is an expensive hobby, and if not in practical hands, birds and money are quickly lost. When in their home provided for them by our Great Creator they have all that is necessary to retain their vigour and song, and as a great lover of all objects

that move in this world, and on behalf of our sweet little minstrel I implore you that unless you are thoroughly prepared, both in pocket and knowledge, to cater for his wants in a way that will retain him as he is in his wild life, not to attempt to keep in captivity the King of Songsters.

Catching. I may say here that the Nightingale is a most easy captive if once located. I do not advocate bird lime for this purpose, but an elliptical wire trap, which may be purchased for about a shilling. Having secured your trap to the ground by means of the stout wire pins, set it and bait with a mealworm, in close proximity to where the Nightingale was seen; take care to cover the whole of the folded netting with grass, to hide it from view. Having done this, stand away out of sight of the bird, but in sight of the trap, and you will not have long to wait, for the Nightingale cannot resist the temptation; without a moment's thought, after once seeing the mealworm, he is down and caught, almost instantaneously. I have used lime on two occasions, but give me the traps referred to, for your bird is unsoiled, and complete in feather, if suffering a little from shock.

Meteing off and Steadying. This is a fairly easy matter, providing fair judgment is given and a little forethought used. I find that a box cage about $24 \times 10 \times 12$ with linen top, and green gauze front answers admirably. Put perch in centre, and one about three and

a half inches from each end, provide plenty of live mealworms in a small earthenware vessel, likewise water, and leave your captive alone for a few hours. In the meantime soak a few live ants' eggs, and before serving, dry them in a towel; place these in the same dish that mealworms were in, and add a few more of the latter cut up, and once again leave your bird. On the second day add a pinch of biscuit, hard boiled egg, and grated raw carrot, to the other two ingredients, mix well together, and serve as before.

When once on this food, you can gradually reduce the mealworms, until none are given with the food at all, but offered as a tit bit, to induce your bird to look for your coming.

General Feeding. Once your bird has got fairly steady, remove him from the gauze fronted cage to an ordinary stock cage, with food and water tins on either side, in the shape of a drawer, the latter should have a sliding top as described in another chapter.

For a good stock mixture, you must first obtain a supply of the *best* ants' eggs, as there is nothing to my mind that is equal to these as a staple food. Use two parts of these to one part each of hard boiled egg (fresh) and one part Osborne biscuit, moisten the same with a little grated raw carrot, or boiled potatoe, and serve fresh every morning. See that none of the previous days supply is left, as it may get rank, and your bird suffer accordingly. Don't on any account forget a few mealworms each day, at least half a dozen; these I

advise you to pinch the heads as they are apt to live in the crop and cause unnecessary suffering. A spider, green caterpillar, and various flies, likewise wasp grub and *scalded* gentles will be appreciated, but don't over do your bird with insect life one day and nothing the next.

In the winter time, when flies, gentles, wasp grubs, etc., are not obtainable, a little ripe banana, grocers' currants, or part of a raisin will often be acceptable.

Above all don't forget a bath and plenty of clean water to drink, and once well on with this food with a few mealworms night and morning, your bird should need less attention and thrive.

Hand Rearing. This is a task that I will, at the outset, tell you is one that needs a deal of patience, care and warmth, but it can be done as I have reared many nests from ten days old, also Stonechats, Whinchats, Yellow Wagtails, Pied Wagtails, White-throats, Redstarts, Nightingales, Woodpeckers, Wrens, Swallows, Housemartins and Cuckoos. All can be reared practically from the directions written hereunder if, of course, a little forethought is used where fruit, etc., is required to carry out the natural requirements of the bird under charge.

Take your bird, nest and all, at ten days old, as at this time they are just about right and will gape well for the reception of food. After carefully removing the nest, place them in a covered basket and get them home as quickly as possible, taking care, of course, that the

“arm of the law” does not find out your prize. Having got your birds home, place them near the kitchen fire (this is within reason), and at night I advise you to cover them right over with cotton wool, putting them in the oven if the fire is out and the oven not too warm, as here they are free from draught which at all costs must be avoided.

Prepare a food of two parts of best live ants’ eggs (soaked and dried in a towel), hard-boiled egg and grated carrot two parts, and a few finely chopped mealworms, make the same into a stiff paste and feed every hour and half, not forgetting to administer water, say three or four times a day, which I advise you to serve by means of a quill.

As a change, a little scraped raw fresh beef, mixed with the food in place of the mealworms, will be found beneficial, likewise a few very small green caterpillars inserted in the beak as a tit-bit will be relished and act as a purgative, which at this time is of great importance. Having once got your birds able to peck up for themselves, part of your great task is accomplished, but, even from now until after the trying ordeal of the first moult, the greatest attention and care has to be taken otherwise your charges will go in decline and die, as I find many do not seem to have the good sense to look after themselves sufficiently to keep up their stamina for some weeks, so that during this time a plentiful supply of live food, such as mealworms, wasp grub, greenfly, caterpillars, cockroaches, etc., is most necessary.

Whenever you undertake this task I wish you good fortune which I can but think you will have if you follow out what I have here described.

Exhibiting. Generally speaking, although of very sombre dress, the Nightingale is a great favourite on the show bench and many judges place it, if a good specimen, before anything else that may be staged.

I think I am not far wrong in saying that hundreds of people never knew what a Nightingale was like until they saw it at some local show, where its identity was pointed out to them, for singing at a show is, of course, quite out of the question with the general Nightingale although I heard one singing at the Palace some two years ago; this, I believe, was a hand reared specimen and, needless to say, it was quickly claimed.

In selecting a show specimen, obtain one as bold in the chest as possible, good size in body, large keen eye, and of good sound colour throughout, standing well up when perched, and free from broken claws or nails.

I advise you to stage it in a bow-fronted cage about $14 \times 8 \times 11$, nicely enamelled pale blue or apple-green, with lining of pine sawdust at the bottom, and not peat, as the latter is too much like the bird, hence it takes the richness of its body colour away.

Attractive Qualities. But for the fact that he is a delicate bird to cater for, I know no bird more interesting than the Nightingale as a cage bird, for once he can be induced to sing he is not only a charm to the household

but a valuable asset, as a bird that will sing in the house has always a ready sale and commands a good figure.

I have had two that have sung most beautifully, they were not kept in the house but in a specially constructed aviary in the garden, and so tame was the one that I could lift him off the perch by offering a mealworm, and he always seemed to be on the look-out for me to give him some tit-bit. But, alas! the time came when they were no more, for the one died from inflammation of the liver and bowels and the other one, I believe, died from natural causes after seven years of cage and aviary life.

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla (Linnæus).



'The property of Mr. H. J. CHICK, Nottingham.

BLACKCAP

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six inches; bill dark brown, medium length, and straight; the whole of the upper parts of the body, with the exception of the upper part of the head, which is jet-black, are ash-grey, slightly tinged with brown; wing quills brown, shading to grey; tail quills similar; lower part of head, breast, belly, and under tail coverts pale ash-grey, shading to white at the vent.

The female is rather larger than the male, but is easily distinguished by reason of the fact that she lacks the familiar black cap that adorns the male, the same, in this case being of a rufous-brown, and the general colouration of the remainder of the body is inclined to a redder tint.

Habitation. Generally found throughout these Islands, inhabiting woods and orchards, or in the vicinity of them. He is particularly partial to small coppices, where plenty of brush wood abounds, and it is here that he makes for when he arrives in April, and remains there until he returns to a warmer climate, to spend the winter.

Nest and Eggs. The former is generally found in brambles, thick set and wild hedges, and in under-growths, sometimes in orchards some four or five feet from the ground. It is composed of dried roots and

grass, with lining of horse or cow hair, and of very loose construction. I have known it affected by the weather on several occasions in the West of England. Five eggs are the general clutch, varying in colour and marking in different localities, and by different parents, but for the most part they are of greyish-brown, spotted and streaked with deeper brown. I have known them to be almost a very pale terra-cotta, and marked with a darker shade. The most certain way to distinguish them, is to see the parent birds. Time: May and June.

Countryside Notes. Arriving toward the latter end of April, these sweet little warblers go forth and distribute themselves generally through these Islands, perhaps not so much in the North of Ireland and Scotland, but you may go where you will in the early months of Spring and Summer, you will be most sure to hear the sweet trills, and hollow warbling of the Blackcap.

I was sat on a gate, outside a homestead, some two years ago, resting myself after a long trudge, and I had not been there many seconds when, on the outer twigs of a large privet-bush close at hand, one of these sweet little fellows squat himself down, and warbled away for nearly a quarter of an hour, over and over again the wonderful variety of notes were repeated, and although a rather cold wind was blowing at the time, my little friend with all his ruffled feathers did not cease his sweet carolling, until the farmhouse cat came along the road.

I at once went in search of his nest, and had little difficulty in finding it, for when looking in a clump of

blackthorn, I glanced upwards, and he had just come out of some very wild ivy, growing round an old dead tree (rather a singular place to find a Blackcap's nest), but I went across and moved the leaves to have a peep, and the female bird flew off. In the nest there was a full clutch of eggs, which duly hatched, and I had the good fortune to hand-rear two of the young.

Catching. You cannot do better than adopt the method recommended in the case of the Nightingale, but preferably bait with a small green caterpillar.

Meteing off, Steadying, and General Feeding. See Nightingale, and all should go well. You will find this bird also very fond of a little fruit, such as currants, raspberries, bananas, blackberries, elder and privet berries. In the Winter a few finely-chopped grocer's currants would be appreciated mixed with the food.

Hand Rearing. You cannot do better than that recommended in the case of the Nightingale, with an addition of a little fruit, as mentioned above, mixed with it.

Exhibiting. I am sorry to say that the Blackcap does not do so well on the show bench as he might do. I think this is only by reason of the fact that he has to compete with far more gorgeous and perhaps more entertaining birds, as you must know birds are not judged by their song at our shows.

I have seen many good specimens out this year, but I think that if the British bird fancy grows at such a pace for the next three years as it has done the last three that the time is not far distant when better classification will be offered in the insectivorous section, and right well is it required, for it is a case to-day of just what a judge fancies, and the others have to stand down.

For an exhibition specimen you require a bird of good bold type, nice broad skull of the densest black and a back of the finest hue. Steadiness is a great feature in this bird, for he is often inclined to be restless and cling to the wires of his show cage, and of course cannot be fairly examined by the judge. General condition and polish are two great factors that go to make the necessary finish to an exhibition Blackcap.

Attractive Qualities. Ever bright if in good health is the worst I think that can be said of the Blackcap, for if tenderly cared for he is a most satisfied little fellow. I kept one in grand health for nearly four years, but one of our treacherous Winters was too much for his little constitution, and he joined the "great majority." This bird was a gem for docility; he would sit on my hand, stand on my head while I walked about, and one time he started to warble on my shoulder. He was a hand reared specimen that came over from Germany, and truly sorry was I the day that he was no more.

Greater Whitethroat

Sylvia cinerea (Bechstein).



GREATER WHITETHROAT

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five and a half inches; bill brown, rather short and straight; the whole of the upper parts are brown; head and neck tending to grey; back of a reddish tint; larger wing quills brownish-grey; lesser wing quills edged with a reddish shade; tail quills dusky-brown in the centre, edged with white and buff on the outer edges; chin and throat greyish-white; breast, belly, vent and under tail coverts pale grey, slightly tinged with bright red.

The female is similar in size, but not so bright in general colouration, and lacks the head-markings and the reddish tinge on the belly.

Habitation. Generally common throughout the British Isles throughout the Spring and Summer months, where bushes, brambles and thickets abound, moving about with great rapidity, never seeming at rest.

Nest and Eggs. The nest, which is often placed amongst blackberry briars and other low-lying bushes in more or less wild and uncultivated grounds, is composed of dried grass and hair, similar to that of the Lesser Whitethroat. Five eggs are laid as a rule of a creamy underground, with a slight tinge of pale green, spotted on the larger end with pale reddish-brown.

Countryside Notes. "Peggy," as he is familiarly known by most people, is similar in his movements to

that of his near relative the Lesser Whitethroat, always being most quick, and more or less on the alert. Yet, singular to relate, if you happen to catch him on some outstanding stem of a dog-rose or blackberry briar, singing his peculiar, yet not by any means disagreeable, song, he will stay there until you are in close proximity before he attempts to depart, and then with a quick dart downwards he apparently drops into the hedge bottom, but on alighting on the spray or twig at the foot of the hedge he darts on and on, gradually working again to the top, and when you make his acquaintance further down it is more easy to imagine it is another little Peggy than the one that you saw just before.

Very soon after his arrival in this Country he settles down to domestic duties with his little mate, and when the young are hatched and able to care for themselves the second brood are on the way. The young apparently keep in close touch with their parents until the end of September, when they return with them to a more genial climate on the shores of the Mediterranean..

Catching. There is no better way of catching that I know than the elliptical trap, as recommended for the Nightingale, although I know that large numbers are taken by means of a limed twig, but in my opinion owing to the shock of losing feathers and the terrible condition it gets the bird in, it is most cruel to use it.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. Carry out that recommended for the Nightingale and your bird

will thrive. He is not at all difficult to steady, being very docile as a rule when caged after a week or ten days of it.

Hand Rearing. I cannot recommend anyone to do this, as it is not worth while.

Exhibiting. Although a beautiful bird, he is far too common to score in our open shows. He may do well in a members' class, providing there is not much competition.

Attractive Qualities. This little bird is a favourite, like his brother the Lesser Whitethroat, I believe, to all who know him. I have always found him most lively and entertaining, obliging you frequently with his song when the weather is bright.

Perhaps he is rather apt to get too fat, but you must not allow this; regulate his food according to his requirements. I have found him at all times a hardy bird, and by no means a fastidious one, which speaks much in his favour.

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca (Linnæus).



LESSER WHITETHROAT

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five inches; bill pale horn colour; rather short and medium size; the whole of the head, neck, back, rump and upper tail coverts grey, tinged with brown; wing quills and tail dusky and greyish-brown; chin, throat, belly and under tail coverts very pale silvery-white, slightly tinged with reddish-brown on the belly.

The female is less bright and distinct in plumage than the male, but otherwise similar.

Habitation. Arriving towards the end of April, it is generally common throughout these Islands, particularly where wild and uncut hedges and bracken abound. It is a bird that is much sought after as a Spring migrant by all ornithologists. After rearing its young it leaves our shores for warmer and more genial climates about the end of September.

Nest and Eggs. The former is not difficult to find, being generally placed amongst briars and blackthorn, or in gorse bushes, on common land, some three to four feet from the ground. Materials used are for the most part dead grass and hair, being loosely placed together after the Blackcap's style.

Five eggs are generally laid, sometimes only four, of a whitish colour, very faintly tinged with green and

spotted with a reddish-brown, particularly on the larger end. Time: May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. This little bird is a great favourite of mine, both in his wild state and in caged life; he is a most graceful little chap at all times; if you meet him in his wild haunts you will find him continually uttering his call-note, "check, check," as he moves along the hedge or bush, always a pattern of neatness to look upon. I think that the novice has often missed him when out for a ramble in search of bird life, for his mouse-like means of getting about makes him a most difficult little chap to follow, unless you are searching for him alone and know his ways and movements, for one minute you will see him in the bottom of the hedge in the undergrowth, the next he slips up with the greatest of ease through the thorns to the top, always on the search for insects, caterpillars, etc., on which he exists. He has a most pleasing little song of his own, and may be easily distinguished from other like birds.

Catching. I have never used any other means than that of the spring net trap recommended for the Nightingale, preferably baited with a small caterpillar and set close into the undergrowth where the bird frequents.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. You cannot do better than that recommended for the Nightingale, as I have had several fresh caught ones, and have never had one die in meteing off when adopting this principle and food recommended.

Hand Rearing. This bird being so easily tamed I do not consider it worth while to adopt this course.

Exhibiting. In this bird we have a most charming exhibit, and what is more, if he is staged in nice form and in good condition, it is seldom indeed he is out of the money, for, take him which ever way you will, you can but admire him. His pretty eye of yellow and white, his lovely grey back and pure silvery breast, together with his smartness of dress and brilliancy of condition, make him all that can be desired for an exhibition bird.

In selecting an exhibition specimen, look for one of good size, sound in colour on back, pure in breast colour and of fine texture of plumage.

Attractive Qualities. He is brim full of them, from all points of view, for in a cage he is a most satisfied little fellow, always on the hop from perch to perch, and, in the more genial days of even the Winter, he will oblige you with his little song, often stood on one leg and quite unconcerned while giving it. He is a rascal on the mealworm tin and can be persuaded to come on to the hand to reach one if care is taken and kindness meted out to him.

If you want a really hardy bird, of the insectivorous kind, as a pet, I am sure no one will deny saying that in this little fellow you have it to the letter.

Garden Warbler

Sylvia hortensis (Beckstein).



GARDEN WARBLER

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six inches; bill medium length and straight, fairly strong, though of delicate appearance; head, nape of neck, back, wings and tail olive-brown; a light streak extends from the gape over the eye; throat and breast light brown, shading to a paler hue on the belly, vent and under tail coverts.

Female very similar to male in all directions.

Habitation. Generally common throughout England, but very local in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, in gardens, orchards and young plantations.

Nest and Eggs. The nest, which is more often than not placed in blackthorn bushes or briars, is composed of dried grass, roots and moss, with lining of hair. It is by no means an artistic piece of work, being very loosely placed together, after the style of the Whitethroat.

Five eggs are the general number, of a creamy ground, blotched and spotted with browns of various shades, very similar to that of the Blackcap. Time: May and June.

Countryside Notes. Arriving at the end of April or early in May, this beautiful Warbler is one of the many migrants that fills our orchards, spinneys and countryside with song in the spring and summer months; he is certainly not well known, for I have often enquired about

him in most likely neighbourhoods, and it is rare indeed that I can get a satisfactory answer, he not having made the acquaintance of the average "yokel."

He certainly, to some extent, resembles the Blackcap in his habits and haunts, but has not got the adornment from which the latter takes his name.

I have only had one in my possession, and that was brought to me by a lad who was anxious to know what species of bird it was, and being rather interested I took to it and kept it in good health for some months, but early in the Autumn it had an attack of migratory fever, and after knocking about in the cage for two or three days I gave it its liberty.

Catching. I have heard of its being most easily caught with the Nightingale trap, baited with a meal-worm and set where it was seen, but I have never myself sought for it, so cannot speak from experience in this case.

Steadying, Meteing off and General Feeding. Treat the same as recommended for the Nightingale and the bird will do well. The one I previously kept in grand fettle was fairly docile considering all things.

Exhibiting. I never recollect seeing a specimen of this bird on the bench, but I really fail to see why not, for he is a smart little bird, though of sombre dress, and I should certainly think that if one was to try the experiment and if the gentleman officiating as judge

knows what the bird is, that he would stand a fair chance of being in the first three. Of course this depends on what else there may be in the class and the number also.

Attractive Qualities. As a singer he is a capital little chap. I have had the pleasure many times in Worcestershire of hearing him when he has been flitting about in the orchards and spinneys, and I think there can be no doubt that he would sing equally as well in confinement as in the wild state if properly looked after and cared for, providing of course that you had the good fortune to pull him through the moult and he did not get troubled, as mine was, with migratory fever.

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus (Linnæus).



WILLOW WARBLER

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five inches; bill short, slightly curved and slender; crown of head, nape of neck, back and upper tail coverts light olive-brown; wing and tail quills dull olive-brown, the quills of the former being edged with olive; a sulphur streak extends over the eye and ear coverts; chin, throat and breast yellowish-white, shading to a very pale grey on the belly and under tail coverts.

Female: Very similar to male and hard to distinguish, but the latter may be a shade lighter in colour.

Habitation. Generally plentiful throughout the British Isles from April to September, frequenting tracks where plenty of trees and bushes abound, particularly fond of osier beds which border streams and rivers or marshy lands.

Nest and Eggs. The nest, which is domed-shaped, like that of the Chiff Chaff, is placed on the ground amongst rank grass or twisted herbage, is composed of dried grass, moss and leaves, with lining of hair and feathers. Six eggs are laid as a general rule, although I have on two occasions found seven, those instances, singular to relate, being on the same farm. They are white in the ground colour, spotted with red of a rusty tinge. Some are far more heavily spotted than others,

while, on the other hand, some are hardly spotted at all.
Time : April, May and June, and sometimes July.

Countryside Notes. This little bird is almost identical to our little Spring migrant the Chiff Chaff, and it takes a most practised eye to be able to distinguish them unless you can hear the latter singing his singular little ditty from whence he gets his name. I have sat and watched these birds on many occasions, hunting about among the withy beds, in search of blight and grubs, seemingly being well satisfied with their find, for he often comes to the top of one of the slender stems to sing his little song and down again.

He is at all times a most prim little chap, and always apparently satisfied with all things, for during the Summer of 1901, when such bitter cold winds and deluges of rain fell day after day, I often made his acquaintance along the banks of the Warwickshire Avon, and he never looked any the worse for the rough time he was having, but as blythe and gay as in the most glorious days of Spring and Summer.

Catching. The best means of securing this little bird is a limed twig, set where they are known to be, and baited with a couple of house flies, spiders or similar insects. I have found this method exceedingly successful.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. I have found the food I recommended for the Nightingale suit this bird well, with the addition of a few house flies each

day when obtainable, particularly the little green grub found on the Hawthorne tree.

Hand Rearing. As this bird is so easily taken and so quickly becomes tame, I cannot recommend hand rearing.

Exhibiting. Only on about three occasions have I seen this little Wren on the show bench. It goes without saying he is a most charming little bird, and if nicely colour-fed he looks superb. In selecting a show specimen get the largest possible, the brightest of colouring, nice long eye streak and good wing carriage.

Attractive Qualities. But for the fact that the Willow Wren, like most of the other smaller birds, is of a delicate nature, I know nothing against him. I have kept and moulted many, but I must confess they are rather tedious to get through the moult and require a little more than ordinary care.

He has a pleasing little song, and often a good feed of house flies (which he will readily take from the fingers almost the same day as he is caught), he will often sing his sweet allay.

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix (Bechstein).



THE WOOD WARBLER

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five inches; bill slightly curved, short and very slender; crown of head, nape of neck, back, lesser wing and upper tail coverts light olive green; wings and tail quills brown, edged with greenish-yellow; a sulphur coloured line extends from the gape, over the eye and ear coverts; lower part of head, chin, throat and breast pale sulphur colour, shading to pure white on the belly and under the tail coverts.

Female: Very similar to male, perhaps a little larger in size, but hardly so rich in colour.

Habitation. Fairly plentiful throughout the British Isles, particularly in woods, coppices and brakes, but I believe it is taken by many to be the Willow Wren, owing to its likeness to this bird, but on close examination it is easily distinguished by the pure white on the belly (the Willow Wren is greyish-white); the eye streak of this bird is more prominent and the general colouring of the back brighter.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is generally placed in dead branches and undergrowths, in coppices and woods, close on the ground. It is composed of dried grass, moss and leaves and a little hair. It is very difficult to find owing to its being domed similar to that of the Chiff Chaff and Willow Wren, and the materials being so like the surroundings.

Five eggs are the general number, of a whitish colour, thickly covered with brown and greyish spots, particularly on the larger end. Time: May and June.

Countryside Notes. Early in the genial month of May, as you leave the town for the woodlands, if you are at all acquainted with bird song, you cannot help but notice the brisk, though short and sweet, melody of the Wood Wren, as he starts with his *chiet, chiet, chiet*, always on the move; from sprig to sprig, which seems almost characteristic of the warbler families.

He keeps up his bright little song until the young are hatched, and, from then, until he leaves this country in September, you hear little of him, but his constant calling, *gee-ur, gee-ur*, as he flits about finding food for his little mate and family.

I am very partial to this little ball of feather; like the rest of the Wren family, there is something so docile and beautiful in them that, when once known to the younger ornithologist, it is ever a pleasure for him to find them and listen to their delightful song.

Steadying, Meteing off and General Feeding. Carry out that which is recommended for the Nightingale with addition of greenfly, house fly and caterpillars whenever obtainable, and your bird will do well and will be a source of pleasure to you.

Hand Rearing. In the Wood Wren you have perhaps a more valuable bird than you have in the Willow Wren and, as a consequence, I consider it worth while, if you have the chance of a nest, to hand rear them.

Follow the instructions given in the case of the Nightingale, remove the wings from a few house flies each day and insert in the beak, also a small green caterpillar or two will do good and be appreciated.

Exhibiting. Like the Willow Wren, in some way, this little chap does not seem to be a popular show bird, but for why I cannot say. It is rarely seen on exhibition and yet it is none the less successful when it is shown, but it may be owing to the fact that few of our judges would recognise it from the Willow Wren in a show cage; in consequence our enthusiasts think it better to keep him at home.

In selecting a show specimen, size, of course, is a great feature, the general body colour needs to be as bright as possible, the eye streak clearly cut and distinct, and the white on the belly and vent to be pure and free from greyness; withal general condition and steadiness must not be overlooked, for in all exhibition specimens these two are matters of great importance.

Attractive Qualities. From the tip of his beak to the end of his tail he is a sweet little chap in a cage or aviary, even on the alert for tit-bits, either given him by his keeper or that which may by chance come within his reach in a haphazard way. Of flies he is particularly fond; with these, and a few small green grubs from the blackthorn bush, it is an easy matter to make him quite steady and even affectionate very soon after he is first a captive.

Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus streperus (Vieillot).



REED WARBLER

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five and a half inches; bill slender, medium length and straight; head, neck, back and upper tail coverts a warm chestnut-brown, shading to a slightly lighter hue on the wings; tail quills light brown; wing quills dark brown, edged with a paler shade; a pale sulphur streak extends from the gape over the eye; chin and throat white, breast, belly and under tail coverts buffish-white.

Female: Very similar indeed to the male, perhaps a shade smaller and paler in back colouring.

Habitation. Generally common in the Southern, Midland and Western Counties of England and Wales, on the banks of rivers, lakes and streams where reeds abound.

Nest and Eggs. The former is almost a work of art, being most ingeniously woven into the stems of reeds, to thus hold it secure in case of storm or flood. It is very deep and cup-like in formation, and is composed of dried grass, moss and bents with lining of finer materials.

Four eggs are the general number to a clutch, of a greenish-white colour, heavily mottled and spotted with a darker shade of the same colour. Time: June and July.

Countryside Notes. In the tall reeds at the side of some friendly river the Reed Warbler makes his home,

and is seldom seen or heard many yards away from his little abode, although occasionally he crosses to the other side, thinking perhaps to find some nice plump grub on yonder reeds.

He is practically unknown in Scotland and Ireland, but why this should be, other than unsuitable climate, I cannot say.

Often when I have been sat by the river as a disciple of Izaak Walton his curious little notes have rung out from the reed beds in front of me, when but for the moving of the reeds you would never know he was there, for he is for a greater part of his life hid from view, and it is no easy task to get even a glimpse of him, always creeping mouse-like from reed to reed, first head downwards, then holding on to two reeds at once, presently turning almost a somersault from the upper part of the stem to the lower. Constantly as he moves along he chatters away with great gusto, as if well pleased with himself and those depending on him.

Catching. The taking of this bird is a most difficult task. I have only had the luck to catch one in my life, and that was done in rather a simple way. I was having a day's fishing in the Severn beyond Tewkesbury, and took three rods with me. It was a glorious day, in fact rather too much so from an angling point of view. I rigged up two of the rods first, and left the third in the case thinking I would see what was going before using the third. Fishing is at the best of times a tame job, and that day it was particularly so, and if it had not been for the bit of life that a Reed Warbler in some reeds close

by, added to the quietness of the scene, I should certainly have gone to sleep (like a great many anglers do I believe). However, the little chap kept on chattering to himself, till at last I thought I would see if I could get him, which, by the by, I should not have done had it not been well on in August and the breeding season over. I went a yard or two down the bank to see what chance there was of securing him. I noticed a gap in the reeds, which were not very wide at that spot, where a barge or punt had apparently been standing. It was in this opening that I placed my other rod, with the top joint for about a foot down, nicely laid with lime, which I always carried with me. I baited this by means of pinning a gentle in the midst, and in less than half an hour the little chap was mine. He was a beautiful specimen, and lived a long time in the cage I constructed on purpose for him.

Hand Rearing. Do this by all means if you have the good fortune to get hold of a nest of young. Take at nine or ten days, nest and all, and treat the same as recommended in the case of the "Gale."

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. Follow out the instructions given for the Sedge Warbler and your bird will thrive.

Exhibiting. Although the Reed Warbler is rarely shown, I know no reason for why, but for the fact they are difficult to obtain. A good one should take a lot of stopping if in good feather and condition.

In a show specimen you need as large a bird as possible, of a rich colour throughout, markings on the head distinct, and the eye streak prominent and free from breaks.

Attractive Qualities. A sweet bird all over is the least that can be said of the Reed Warbler, for he is of graceful shape, neat attire and most comely in appearance.

I have not found him difficult to cater for, and if well fed will often please you with his curious little song in the Spring and Summer. I made quite a pet of the only one I ever caught, it became remarkably tame and fearless, and always seemed quite at home.

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus phragmitis (Bechstein).



SEDGE WARBLER

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about four and a half inches; bill medium length, very slender and straight; crown of head brown, lined with a darker shade; nape, back wings and upper tail coverts two shades of tawny brown; wing and tail quills dark brown, the former are edged with a lighter shade; ear coverts lightish brown; a pale yellow streak extends from the gape, over the eye, and above the ear coverts; chin and throat greyish-white; breast, belly and under tail coverts pale yellowish-brown.

Female: Similar to the male, but less brilliant in general colouring.

Habitation. Generally common throughout these Islands, inhabiting marshy tracks, wide ditches, rivers and lakes, where it makes its home in the sedge and water weeds that abound there.

Nest and Eggs. The former is well concealed in the sedges and other wild growths that are to be found at the sides of water courses, ponds, etc. It is composed for the most part of dried grass and bents, most cleverly woven into the surrounding herbage, which protects it in wind and storm. It is generally lined with horse or cow hair, and occasionally a few feathers. Five eggs is the general clutch, of a yellowish-brown colour, spotted

and marked with a darker shade, and fine black streaks on the larger end. Time: June and July.

Countryside Notes. Go where you will any time from the middle of May until September in the vicinity of water, where reeds and quietude abound you are sure to hear this happy little chap chattering away the whole day long. Along the banks of the Avon, Wye and Thames they are exceedingly common, and many times when I have been having a half day with the rod and line they have intruded as far as to perch on my rod, and many times I have caught the young when they have just left the nest by means of a small limed twig, with which I have quietly placed on their back and lifted them up. When the chick begins to shout, the parent bird is soon in hot pursuit, and he will come as close as he dare to you to try and rescue your latest captive.

When I have had a night out on the river bank in the middle of Summer, I have often heard this cheeky little chap start chattering away when by chance he has heard me talking to my friends, and I often thought that he came closer even in the dark for the sound appeared to get nearer to us; in fact, at times seemed quite close at our feet but, owing to the fact that we could neither see him or the herbage move, I cannot definitely say.

Steadying, Meteing off and General Feeding. Carry out the instructions given in the case of the Nightingale with additions of flies and grubs as often as possible and your bird will do well.

Hand Rearing. I cannot say that I recommend this in the case of the Sedge Warbler by reason of the fact that he is easily steadied and not at all difficult to cater for.

Exhibiting. This bird is, I am sorry to say, another little mite that is seldom exhibited although I believe a very fine specimen has been shown this year and, for the most part has been successful, and rightly so to, for they are for ever prim and neat, beautifully rounded tail, and a most intelligent look, make them a most delightful exhibition bird.

In selecting an exhibition specimen good size is necessary, the upper body colour should be as bright as possible, the white on the throat and chin free from feathers of a darker shade, the eye streak should be clearly defined and, withal, good condition and steadiness.

Attractive Qualities. In the Sedge Warbler you have a charming little fellow, ever lively and happy, if in good health; he is not at all difficult to keep and will often oblige you with his curious little song.

I have had three in my time and I always found them birds that I could recommend to the novice and champion alike.

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa grisola (Linnæus).



SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six inches; bill straight, medium length, and fairly strong; the whole of the head and upper parts are lightish brown, the head being minutely spotted with a darker shade; wings and tail brown; chin, throat and breast dirty white, spotted and streaked with brown; belly and under tail coverts dirty white.

Female: Similar to male and hard to distinguish.

Habitation. Generally common throughout these Islands from May to September, when it departs again to the South to spend the winter.

Nest and Eggs. This bird has many nesting sites. I have seen between two layers of fungi projecting from a fruit tree, on the ledges at the head of old pollard stumps, on the branches of fruit trees, trellis work, where rose trees are trained against the wall, projecting beams of door porches, etc., etc. Not only does he take up all sorts of positions for his nest, but all kinds of material is used in nest construction, such as dried grass, moss, leaves, roots, cobwebs, hair, wool and feathers; for the most part I have found it to be neatly woven together and secured with the cobwebs.

Five eggs are the general number, although I have known only four on more than one occasion. They are

generally of a pale greyish colour, slightly tinged with green, and spotted with reddish-brown. Although singular to relate, their eggs, like their nest and nesting sites, vary, which makes them difficult to distinguish unless you have seen the parent birds. Time: June and July.

Countryside Notes. Reaching this country early in May, although he has practically no song, the Spotted Flycatcher is not long in letting you know he has arrived once more in the old breeding grounds, for, as you walk along the country roads or those of the suburban towns, he will drop almost at your feet after some fly or other insect and dart up into the nearest tree as cool as a cucumber.

I have many times sat and watched these birds under the shade of a good row of trees or in an orchard; the great rapidity of their flight and their acrobatic movements through the air are such that hardly any other bird can accomplish.

If you get in close proximity of where they are, you can often hear them snap their bills as they catch an insect.

After settling down to domestic duties, and incubation is over, both he and his little mate are on from morn till eve in close attendance, catching and delivering thousands of insects for their little chicks in their cosy nest of wool.

The young, when they leave the nest, are, to my mind, rather prettier than the parents, being more or less

marked down the whole of the back with shades of light and darker brown, but they soon shed their nest feathers and don the adult to be in readiness to leave this country with their parents.

Catching. I am sorry to say in this case I am compelled to advise the use of the limed twig as I have found this the only way to secure them.

Watch the movements of your bird for a time and note what twig he alights on most. Having done this, clean it as far as possible from leaves and sprigs, smear with lime and you will not have long to wait.

Steadying, Meteing off and General Feeding. Treat exactly as recommended for the Nightingale, adding a few house flies to its food.

Hand Rearing. I do not consider this bird worth it.

Exhibiting. Very few of this species have been exhibited of late years for, like the Greater Whitethroat, they are by no means popular as an exhibition bird.

Personally I have never exhibited one and I don't think I shall attempt to do so now. I do not altogether condemn it, but it is not sufficiently entertainly to make it attractive to the eye.

Attractive Qualities. As a cage bird he is a nice little chap, perhaps rather delicate to cater for during the winter. I consider him more suitable for an indoor aviary where he will get more exercise and be able to often catch his own food in the natural manner.

Pied Flycatcher

Muscicapa atricapilla (Linnæus).



PIED FLYCATCHER

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about five inches; bill fairly stiff, short and straight; the forehead in Summer has two white spots, but in the Winter it is black, like the crown, nape, back and wing coverts, which are brownish-black; wing and tail quills dusky black, the latter being white on the outer edges; the edges of the greater wing coverts and outer webs of the tertials are white, and form a sort of bar; chin, throat, breast and belly silvery-white, slightly tinged with golden-brown on the sides.

Female: Not so clear in general colouring as the male, and does not have the white spots on the forehead in the breeding season.

Habitation. Very sparingly distributed over the north parts of England and Wales. I have seen three pairs in the West of England, one in Gloucestershire and two in Wilts.

Nest and Eggs. The former is generally placed in the holes of decayed trees, in old stone walls and crevices of rock. It is for the most part a mixture of dried grass, leaves, moss and hair, sometimes feathers are used. Five eggs are the general number, although in the nest I found in Gloucestershire there was only four. They are of a bright blue colour, and very similar indeed to those of the common Redstart, but a little smaller in size and slightly spotted with reddish-brown.

Countryside Notes. The Pied Flycatcher is rarely seen 'tis true, but when he is he is not forgotten for some time, for his black and white plumage and pretty personality, always clean and neat, ever sprightly and dashing about after the various insects that constitute his larder, make him a sight to be remembered.

At the time I discovered the nest in Gloucestershire in an old dead tree, the pair were then just preparing their nest. I kept constant watch on the place during the time of incubation, and it was almost surprising when the young were hatched the journeys that were made with food by both the parents, for it seemed only minutes they were away from their chicks, yet often they went a good distance to find the food.

I should certainly have had a couple of these youngsters if I could have got at them, but the tree was in a somewhat dangerous position, which seemed to me if I attempted to get at it I should get a bath in the pond below over which the trunk leaned, so I thought the wiser plan would be to leave them alone.

I only found one nest of the two pairs in Wilts, and fully intended getting a couple there, but unfortunately it was robbed of the eggs on my second visit and the parent birds apparently gone.

Steadying, Meteing off and General Feeding. I have found the method recommended for the "Nightingale," with the addition of a few live flies and scalded gentles, answer well.

Hand Rearing. Should you have the good fortune to secure a nest of these birds treat as recommended for the "Gale," with an occasional house fly (say half a dozen) killed before being inserted in the beak, and your birds should do well.

Exhibiting. Unfortunately this pretty bird is very seldom seen in captivity in this country, let alone at our exhibitions. Two or three very fine specimens have been exhibited this last season, but neither has been absolutely a tip-top specimen.

If you are lucky enough to secure a really good one success is sure to await you, for they are never out of the money if in nice condition and well staged.

In selecting your bird (if you have any option) get the biggest, providing he has a nice clear breast, well tanned on the sides, the markings on the wings pure white and nicely cut, the feet and toes free from swellings and goutiness, and withal general body colour.

Attractive Qualities. In this bird we have all that is neat and beautiful in the form of bird life, and he is a most affectionate pet with his owner.

His one great fault is that his little feet are very apt to get swollen, and as a consequence he loses his toe nails; but for this he has no detriment, and I can confidently recommend him to anyone requiring a neat little bird.

Chiff Chaff

Phylloscopus rufus (Vieillot).



CHIFF CHAFF

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about four and half inches; bill slender, fairly long and straight; crown of head, nape of neck, back and upper tail coverts a yellowish olive green; wing and tail quills dark yellowish-brown, the former edged on the outer web with light olive green; a pale sulphur streak extends from the base of the beak over the eye and ear coverts; chin, throat, breast, belly and under tail coverts bright yellowish-white, rather warmer in colour on the sides and flanks.

Female: Very hard to distinguish from the male but from hearing the latter sing.

Habitation. Migratory, arriving in April and departing early in October. Generally well distributed throughout the whole of England and Wales; hardly so plentiful in Scotland and Ireland.

Nest and Eggs. The former, which is domed, is placed on the ground or very near to it, generally on the banks that abut ditches, sometimes in rank grass on railway banks, also in woods. Dried grass, leaves and moss, with lining of feathers, are the general materials used; five eggs are the general number, of a white ground lightly spotted with purplish brown. Time: May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. Often as early as the end of March, as you visit the thicker wooded parts of our

Countryside you will hear the joyful little song of the Chiff Chaff, ever seeming to be happy as he flits from tree to tree searching every bud and catkin for some grub or insect that may be secreted there. Many people consider that when this little mite is once heard that Spring has come, but many times he has to suffer through making the acquaintance of our beautiful Country too early in the year. He is generally of a most wandering nature, and not until he has definitely fixed on his little lady and the spot that is to be the shelter for his nest and eggs does he attempt to settle down in any given area.

Looking at him at close range he is really a sweet little fellow; he is most difficult to distinguish from the Willow Wren but for his song and the fact that he takes to more lofty positions when searching for food.

As Summer moves on he gets far more sociable and a far better view of him is obtainable.

Round about the counties of Gloster, Wilts, Berks and Somerset he always seems to be particularly common and I have often noticed him there well on in the month of October.

Catching. I have found the best way to catch this little chap is by means of a limed twig, set where he frequents, and a few flies stuck on the line with one wing; if he is anywhere handy he will soon be down after the flies and find his mistake out.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. You cannot do better than treat the same as recommended for

the Willow Wren as I have always found the Chiff Chaff fare well when so treated.

Hand Rearing. He is not worth the trouble, being so easily caught and quickly steadied and generally fairly easy to keep.

Exhibiting. Rarely indeed, like many others of our most charming countryside birds, do we see this little fellow on the show bench. I believe it was shown last year fairly successfully, but the classification at our shows for soft bills generally is far too scanty to allow him a fair look in. No doubt this, like many other matters, will mend itself later on as our hobby extends in popularity.

In selecting an exhibition specimen get one as large as possible, good, sound and bright colour throughout; see that the eye streak is long and well defined.

Attractive Qualities. Generally speaking, he is as hardy as any of our soft billed birds in a cage or indoor aviary, providing, of course, suitable food is provided and warmth given in winter. In an aviary constructed in the corner of a heated greenhouse I saw a pair that had bred there on two occasions, they having been caught three Summers previously as youngsters in the greenhouse where they were kept; they look really beautiful as they swing round and round on a swivel swing fixed in the centre of the aviary. I asked my friend what had become of the young, and he told me both lots had died, the parents either having neglected them or that the food provided was unsuitable.

Gold-crested Warren

Regulus cristatus (Linnæus).



GOLD-CRESTED WREN

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about three and a half inches; bill slender, short and straight; forehead creamy white, tinged with light olive-green; crown of head bright lemon in front, shading to a darker tinge at the back, bordered on both sides by a thin black line; nape of neck, back and upper tail coverts light olive-green; wing and tail quills black, edged with yellow; wing coverts black, tipped with white; the whole of the throat, breast, belly and under tail coverts pale grey, tinged with buff.

The female is far less brilliant in general colouring, but about the same size as her mate.

Habitation. Resident and fairly well distributed throughout the United Kingdom, in fir plantation and shrubberies.

Nest and Eggs. The nest, which is a work of art, is generally suspended from the outer branches of a spruce or fir tree. I have seen it in yew and holly trees. It is for the most part made of moss, fine grass and spider webs, sometimes hair is also used, the whole being most beautifully woven together, and lined with soft feathers. Seven eggs is, I believe, the usual clutch. I have once met with six, and on one occasion eight. They are of a delicate pinky ground, thickly spotted with dark red. Time: May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. This little mite is the smallest of our native birds, and is generally to be found in small flocks in fir plantations where they move in company with the Long-tailed Tit, and it is in this miniature wilderness that it spends the whole of its life, working the rows of trees up and down, day in, day out, in search of insect life on which it exists. I saw quite a little colony of these birds in a fir plantation just outside Caversham, in Berkshire, and it was a pretty sight indeed to watch these little bits of fluff and feather working the trees, searching in every cone that came their way, seemingly determined to give no spider or other insect any quarter if he were at home. I think it is rare that they leave a large plantation when they once take to it, for I have known a pair to inhabit a garden in which a large quantity of yew and other shrubs of ripe old age were, and they bred young ones in those trees for several years. Some of the latter went away, but the others seemed to stay.

Catching. This is rather a delicate matter to accomplish, as you have not only got to catch your bird on the tree, but it requires most gentle care in releasing your bird from the lime, or you will find him dead in your hand from shock. I have caught several in the garden mentioned in the Country Notes by means of a fly fishing rod and a piece of thin wire securely fastened to the top. Just cover this with good strong lime and watch for your bird, and when he is busily engaged in the hunt for an insect quickly touch him on the back with the end of the wire and reach him down.

Don't delay feeding him, but do so within half an hour by opening the bill with a sharpened match, and inserting a house fly or a live ant's egg. If this is not done your bird will quickly perish.

Steadying, Meteing off and General Feeding. In the meteing off of this tiny little mite the greatest care has to be exercised, and unless you have a plentiful supply of the very best ants' eggs, costing about 3/4 per lb., likewise plenty of mealworms, I do not advise you to try your hand on so delicate a bird.

If you have these foods in plenty by you, place your bird in a small box cage with gauze front, perches in centre and at ends, serve in a small dish some of the ants' eggs mentioned after being soaked and dried in a towel, cut up a few very small mealworms and mix with the former; place water at opposite end of cage in a small jar for the first day or two, and later in the ordinary drinker. It will be necessary for you to provide a few live house flies each day; let these loose in the cage and the bird will catch them; these are good as a food, and they also afford the bird some exercise in running them down. After say a week on this diet, gradually introduce some good insectivorous food, made of the finest possible ingredients as you would an ordinary soft bill, but even then you must supply a few of the ants' eggs and cut up mealworms in a separate dish, and flies as often as you can. Acting on this, I have kept Goldcrests a long time in good health and feather, and they have often made attempts to sing in the brighter days of Spring and Summer.

Hand Rearing. Far too delicate an undertaking.

Exhibiting. In the Gold-crest we have a wee sweet bird, and really his sprightliness when we see him at a show is almost marvellous, for he appears nothing in the world but a little round ball, with two little pegs attached for supports. He is the centre of attraction to every one that sees him at the shows, and, generally speaking, he is well up in the cards providing he is a good specimen, in nice condition and suitably staged.

In selecting a show specimen obtain one as large as possible, of nice shape and good rich sound colour, large crest of the richest shade possible. The whole of the wing and other markings should be clear and bright and free from any breaks by other colouration.

Attractive Qualities. From the tip of his beak to the end of his tail he is a wee gem of a bird, but it is really difficult to recommend it to anyone unless well acquainted with its habits in wild state, for if they do not get every attention they are soon at the bottom of the cage a corpse. I have had many in my time, and have been fairly successful, but even the most practical hands cannot always keep him for any length of time. He is so small that really you get little or no notice of ill-health, for almost as soon as he shows signs of ailing he has departed this life.

Common Wren

Troglodytes Parvulus (Linnæus).



COMMON BROWN WREN

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about four inches; bill slightly curved, fairly stiff and medium length; head, nape of neck, back and rump tawny brown, the back and rump being slightly marked with a lighter shade; wing and tail quills dusky brown, marked crossways with reddish-brown on the outer webbs; a light streak extends from behind the beak over the eye and ear coverts; chin, throat and breast greyish-buff; belly and under tail coverts pale brown, streaked and marked with a darker shade.

Female: Similar to the male, rather smaller perhaps and not so brilliant and distinct in marking.

Habitation. Generally common throughout these Islands, particularly in wild and waste tracks where bracken abounds, also along rough hedgerows, sometimes in gardens and spinneys.

Nests and eggs. The Wren is one of our most uncertain nest builders as far as position is concerned which are, in some instances, most curious. I have seen it in a pig net hung up in a farm shed, in an old boot at the side of a fowl house, hole in a wall, in the thatch of old cottages, in a letter box fixed in an iron gate, in a small hole in a bank secluded by ivy, in between the bare roots of trees at the roadside, in fact in almost every conceivable nook and cranny.

The materials used are almost as variable as the sites chosen. I have known it made of nothing but hay, with lining of feathers. Moss, dead leaves, dead grass, fern fronds and roots are for the greater part utilised for the outer portion, but seldom anything but feathers are used in lining the interior.

The whole construction being always of a cone shape with small entrance hole similar to that of the Long Tailed Tit but smaller in bulk. Five, six and seven, and even larger numbers than the latter, have been known; they are white in colour and lightly spotted with reddish-brown. Time: April, May, June, July and August.

Countryside Notes. Tail upturned and wings dropped is the general attitude of this game little bird, and there is no denying the fact that he has by far the most powerful song of any of our countryside birds, even apart from his wee personality.

As you ramble along at the side of some wood, copse or spinney, he will flit out from the bottom of the hedge in front of you on to some neighbouring post or twig that is prominently in view, rattle away his most joyful little song, and dart downwards, probably to where he came from. Then, when you have passed, up once again to the same spot to carry out his proud little chorus.

It is truly marvellous how these little mites exist in the Winter, for even then, when the days are milder, he will often come out from under the faggot heap, or the thatch of the rick, and pour forth his song as hearty as ever.

But some of the hard Winters play havoc with him, for I have picked up one or two of these little mites starved to death with the penetrating frost and snow.

I think I am not wrong in saying he is not only known to us all as a sweet little bird with a grand song but he has one of the stoutest little hearts that beat along our countryside.

Catching. This bird is easily caught by the use of a small mesh elliptical net trap, as you would use for the Tree Creeper, baited with a very small mealworm and set where the bird was seen.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. I have found the method described in the article on the "Gold Crest" most successful with this bird, and, although I have had many in my time, they have invariably done well on the bill of fare mentioned.

Exhibiting. Rarely seen at our exhibitions, but invariably successful when shown; this little mite makes a most charming exhibit and quickly wins the hearts of all who see him. I cannot think why he is not more often in evidence for, delicate as he may be, he is not really hard to successfully keep if good food is provided. I have noticed that at one of our largest shows this year this sweet little bird was top of a big class and right well did he deserve his place.

In selecting an exhibition specimen get one as cobby as possible, of good rich ground colour, well defined eye streak, the cross markings on the wings, body and tail standing well out from the ground colour.

Silkiness of feather will naturally come if well fed on the food directed.

Attractive Qualities. But for the fact he is somewhat a delicate bird if not properly cared for and fed, I think there is no more attractive cage bird could exist than the one now under review. One that I had brought me by a gardener became so tame and docile that he would play with my fingers when I put my hand in the cage, invariably clacking when doing so as if he enjoyed the fun. He is a ladies' bird all over and I can thoroughly recommend him as a pet wherever time and means are of no object.

Bearded Tit

Panurus biarmicus (Linnæus).



BEARDED TIT OR REEDLING

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length six and a quarter inches; bill short, slightly curved and rather slender; crown of head pale bluish-grey; nape of neck, back and rump bright golden-brown; wing quills black, shading to grey and white, and tipped with reddish-brown; tail quills golden-brown in the centre, and slightly edged with white on the outer sides. A black widish streak extends from the base of the beak to the eye, then graduating downwards to a fine point at the side of the chin; chin and throat white; breast pinky-white; belly golden-brown; under tail coverts black.

Female: The crown of the head is of a similar colour to the back, and she is void of the black face streaks that adorns the male.

Habitation. Very scarcely distributed in these Islands, but I believe that a few specimens have been seen and caught in Norfolk; they generally frequent marshy lands and river sides, where abundance of reeds and other aquatic plants are found.

Countryside Notes. By far the most beautifully plumaged of any of our native family of Tits is the one now under review. I have not seen it in its wild state, and I think there are not many that have done; he is one of the few that I would go a long way to see. I believe Mr. Lowrne, of Norfolk, has not only seen them,

250 Bearded Tit or Reedling

but caught one or two; the same he successfully exhibited at many of our larger shows.

It must certainly be a very pretty sight to see these beautiful birds in their breeding and feeding grounds, as their magnificent colours must look really beautiful against the pale green background of the swaying reeds.

Catching. I have not had the pleasure of ever trying to catch this very interesting bird, but I should think that the limed twig, baited with a mealworm would be almost certain to have his attention if he caught sight of it, but living such a secluded life, I should think it is rather a difficult task.

Steadying, Meteing off and General Feeding. The only specimen of this beautiful species I ever had was a newly-imported one and very wild. I treated him in identically the same way as I have recommended for the Nightingale, and he did well the whole time he was in my possession. I also found him rather fond of a little crushed hemp seed mixed with his food, and sometimes he would pick all this out and leave the other. Like human beings, I suppose they sometimes like a change.

Exhibiting. For the most part the Bearded Tits that are shown in this country are of Continental nationality, and generally of a rather brighter colour than those bred at home. They perhaps do not meet with so hearty a reception as they might do, but when a true Britisher is shown and its nationality is sure it invariably does well when it is placed in front of a specialist judge.

A good specimen needs to be of the brightest possible colours throughout, the graduating black streaks on the face to be clearly defined and come to a nice fine finish at the bottom.

He is perhaps somewhat difficult to keep clean owing to his long tail if care is not taken to frequently clean out his cage. He will often enjoy a bath if placed in the sunshine on a nice warm day, and this will greatly help him through the moult, and polish up his new attire.

Attractive Qualities. Undoubtedly the Bearded Tit is the most beautiful bird of the seven varieties known to us, and it goes without saying the rarest of them. To look at him in a nice clean suitable cage is always a pretty sight, for as he moves about from perch to floor and *vice versa* he seems to have a most elegant way with him, although at times his tail may appear a little too long.

The one I had was delightfully tame after it had been a few weeks in my possession, and would feed from my fingers without any apparent fear. Just when I began to back my fancy on him as a show bird I had the sad surprise to find him stiff at the bottom of his cage, and since then I have not had another.

Crested Tit

Parus cristatus (Linnaeus).



CRESTED TIT

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about four and half inches; bill fairly stiff, short and straight; crown of head grey, striped with black, the feathers being long at the back of the skull, which are put up at will, and form a crest; nape of neck grey; back wings, upper tail coverts and tail quills brown; a black streak extends from the gape, through the eye, over the ear coverts, to the nape, then turn downwards, curving in so doing round the cheek; cheeks white, minutely spotted with black; another black band extends round the neck, passing upwards on either side to the black on the throat and breast; belly greyish-white; sides greyish-white, slightly tinged with buff; under tail coverts light brown.

The female is very similar in all respects to the male but for the fact the crest is not so prominent and the black on the upper chest and throat is of smaller dimensions.

Habitation. Very rarely seen in these Islands but sometimes in the counties of the North of Scotland where spruce and pine forests abound.

Nests and Eggs. The nest is generally placed in the holes of trees, posts, etc., and composed of dried grass and moss, lined with feathers or wool. Five eggs are laid of a white colour, spotted with red, generally more so on the larger end. Time: May and June.

Countryside Notes. Not having seen this bird in its native haunts, I am unable to write on this matter.

Catching. I should think the same method I speak of for the catching of the Longtailed Tit would prove most successful.

Steadying, Meteing off and General Feeding. Treat the same as recommended for the Longtail variety and your bird will do well.

Hand Rearing. I have never had the pleasure of attempting this, but if I ever have I should adopt the principle recommended for the Goldcrested Wren.

Exhibiting. A rare little chap is this at our shows to-day; in fact I don't really think there has been one at all exhibited this season, for why this should be I really don't know for he is a most charming little fellow at all times when once steadied down and in good health.

A good specimen should have all head and neck markings prominently showing, the spots on the face evenly distributed, good big crest, and, withal, good sound condition and polish.

Attractive Qualities. Like the whole of the Tit family he is a regular happy little chap in a cage when once at home there. The ones I have had have given me a deal of pleasure, for their ever lively movements from perch to perch, continually uttering their funny little call-note, si, si, si. I believe there are very few caught in these Islands at all, but those that are offered for sale are for the most part imported from the continent through agents in London and other port towns.

Long-tailed Tit

Acredula caudata (Linnæus).



The property of Mr. C. T. MAXWELL, Brixton, S.W.

LONG-TAILED TIT

Description of Parent Birds. Male : Length five and a half inches; crown of head white, bordered on either side by a blackish-brown stripe, passing over the eye and meeting at the nape of the neck, thence, some way down the back, diminishing in width to almost a point; scapulars white, heavily tinted with purple; wings black, the inner quills edged with white; upper tail coverts black; centre tail quills black, outer ones edged and heavily marked with white; chin, throat, breast, belly and under tail coverts greyish-white, heavily tinged on the lower parts and sides with bright purple.

Female : Almost identical to male, perhaps a little darker on the head.

Habitation. Fairly plentiful in suitable districts throughout these Islands, moving about in flocks in the Autumn and Winter months for the most part, in woods and coppices and other well-timbered areas.

Nest and Eggs. The former is a rare masterpiece of skill, and although its builders are no longer than a mouse in the body they accomplish this marvellous feat of nest building. It is placed in the smaller twigs of thorn, hedges, sometimes in bushes at the sides of streams or in the middle of plantations.

Glancing at it through the thick leafy foliage one would hardly think it were a nest if one did not know

it, for its large size, peculiar shape and apparently no entrance hole all help to make it the more curious. It is composed on the outside of moss and lichens, most beautifully woven together by means of spider webs and lined with the softest of down and feathers obtainable, the whole of the surrounding twigs being securely built in, so that if you require to take it you cannot do so without a deal of trouble, to say nothing of numerous scratches in cutting away the twigs.

Nine and ten eggs are the usual number. I have once known only seven, but greater numbers have been recorded. They are of a faint bluish colour, spotted with reddish-brown; very small indeed in size, and need most careful handling. Time: May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. This charming little bird I think is known to all of us, if not by name I am sure it is by person, for in the Winter time in the rough and uncut hedges that surround meadow land you can meet him and his little followers almost every day. Up and down, round the nest, on and on, from morning till night, these wee little mites, never seeming to tire, always uttering their peculiar little call note zi, zit as they go, it is a pretty sight to see them; they always seem to have a leader, and when he thinks fit he flits away in an undulating flight to another part of the hedge, or probably away to some neighbouring copse or spinney. They seem particularly fond of the company of the little Gold-crest, and I have often seen them together in fir plantations of the West of England, moving from tree

to tree, row to row, up and down, until the whole of the trees and the cones have been searched to their utmost satisfaction, calling the whole time one against the other as they move along.

Catching. The most successful way that I have found is by means of a limed twig or piece of stiff wire stuck in the ground and leaning over the cage where a call bird of the same species is, but there is one thing against this practice, and that is, that you want to be as quick as thought or you will have such a mess that you never saw, viz., half a dozen Tits all stuck up with lime, and a most pitiful sight, to my mind, to look upon, but if care is taken this, I think, is the best way that I can recommend.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. Follow out the exact instructions given for the Gold-crest and you will be safe. I have never had any difficulty with this little chap, but don't let him stay long after catching him before giving food. If he won't feed himself open the beak with a sharpened match or quill and insert a few soaked live ants' eggs, or an insect or two in preference.

Hand Rearing. Don't attempt it.

Exhibiting. Here we have again a dear little bird that, like many others, is seldom seen on our show benches to-day. A very fine specimen of this wee gem was shown at the Crystal Palace the year before last I

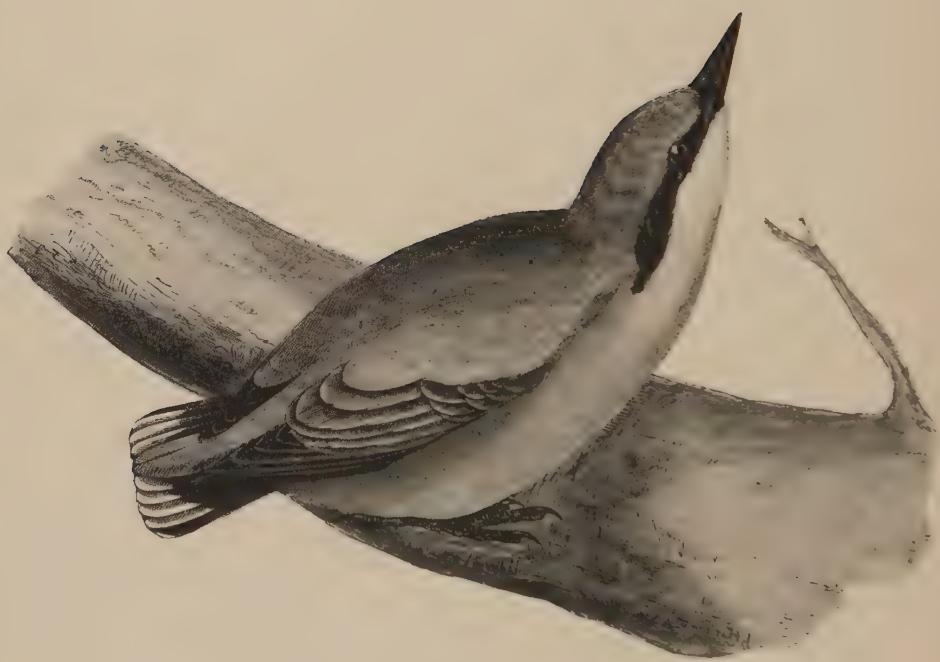
believe, and to the best of my recollection it was in the first four cards, and right well did he deserve it, for he was the picture of health and steadiness, and looked sweetly pretty in his little green cage.

In selecting an exhibition specimen go for one as well marked as possible, with the purplish hue on the sides and belly, the crown needs to be free from any black streaks, and the black line that surrounds the head and joins down the back should be free from breaks of the grey or purple. General steadiness and condition are, of course, important items, but take him on the whole he is by no means a difficult bird to keep in tip-top form.

Attractive Qualities. A really sweet little bird with a very long tail is the best way I think of describing this little chap. I have kept them on several occasions and have always found them a healthy and contented bird; they are certainly a little bit glutinous and have to be watched that they don't get too fat. I am sorry to say I lost the best I ever had through his ever stuffing his "little Mary." He naturally needs tender care in the way of food which anyone would give him on account of his size.

Nuthatch

Sitta cæsia (Wolf).



NUTHATCH

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six inches; bill fairly long, straight and very strong; crown of head, nape, back, lesser wing coverts and centre tail quills bluish-grey; wing quills dusky brown on the inner webs; bluish-grey on the outer ditto; outer tail quills black, tipped with white; cheeks and chin creamy white; a black streak extends from the gape, through the eye turning downwards towards the neck; throat, breast, belly and vent pale buff shading to cinnamon on the sides, under tail coverts deep rust colour marked with white.

Female: similar to male, but not so brilliant in the under colourings.

Habitation. Generally common throughout England, particularly in the South, South-western and Midland Counties, being rather shy he is somewhat difficult to locate.

Nest and Eggs. Generally placed in the holes of trees, particularly elm, which are clad with ivy. Like the Wryneck and Woodpeckers, the Nuthatch is no nest builder but seems content with little or no nesting material, although sometimes this bird does use a few dried grass stems. Five eggs are the general clutch of a white ground and spotted with reddish-brown, sometimes more profusely than others.

Countryside Notes. If you happen to be in the vicinity of any well-wooded area, you are most sure to hear or see the Nuthatch, but he will particularly notice you don't get very close to him. I have heard him many times in the long rows of trees in the Sapperton Valley, near Stroud, shouting his well known call-note *tweet, tweet, tweet* as he moves along.

He is particularly swift in flight and it needs a very quick sight to follow him, and if he happens to be in a well established orchard where there are plenty of pear trees it is a most difficult matter owing to the colour of his back being so like the bark of the trees.

In the Winter time they get somewhat more sociable and come within the farm-yard and often help the fowls to eat their food. A friend of mine in the hard weather has caught them with Indian corn placed under a sieve, so great has been their privation for food.

Catching. I think it is a difficult matter to say the best way to catch this bird. I have never tried to do so myself, but I should think that they would be fairly easy victims of the elliptical net trap baited with a large meal-worm.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. In meteing off this bird you will have a tidy task before you, for you will invariably find him as wild as a polecat. Provide him with a cage lined with virgin bark, similar to the one recommended in another part of the work, provide a good supply of monkey nuts, sun flower seed and hemp, not forgetting a few mealworms each

night and morning, together with a couple of spoonfuls of insectivorous food, if he will eat it. I advise you for the first week or so to cover the front of the cage with a dark cloth, and gradually raise a little each day until removed. Later I think you will find him settle down and behave like a gentleman.

As a staple food it is by far best for you to see what he cares for best of the food recommended above and act accordingly, as any, in fact, all of these are generally speaking nutritious.

Hand Rearing. I have never attempted it and don't consider it worth the while.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird the Nuthatch is really not altogether a favourite, although sometimes he gets on well with those officiating. Good size, rich colour on back and sides are most necessary points, but perhaps the most important of all is steadiness, by reason of the fact that he has to be staged in a bow-fronted cage of rather small dimensions.

Attractive Qualities. When once you have managed to gain his confidence the Nuthatch is a very nice bird as a cage pet, and I believe he is generally a favourite with the ladies.

Certainly he looks pretty climbing about on the bark of his cage and hammering away at a monkey nut or sunflower seed he has placed in a crevice of the bark in his cage. I like him particularly well as an aviary bird, being hardy and looking very sweet flying swiftly along from place to place.

Grey Wagtail

Motacilla melanope (Ballas).



GREY WAGTAIL

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about seven and three-quarter inches, nearly half of which belongs to the tail; crown and cheeks bluish-grey, with a white streak over eye; neck, back, and rump bluish-grey; wing coverts black, tipped with yellowish-white, and heavily marked on the end with white; upper tail coverts greenish-yellow; outer feathers of tail black, edged with white, centre feathers edged with yellow at the base; throat, breast, belly, and underparts bright lemon yellow.

The female is generally less bright in colouring, and not so graceful in movement as the male.

Habitation. Although local in its habits, it is fairly plentiful throughout England and Wales, and some parts of Scotland and Ireland. Like many other birds, they seem to take to a small territory of their own, and no other of the same species dare trespass there.

Nest and eggs. The former is generally placed in the apertures of dislodged stones in bridges, on ledges of rock, sometimes in stone walls, and on rugged banks, all of which must be in close proximity of some stream or water course. It generally consists of dried grass, roots, and moss, lined with cow hair, or feathers. Five eggs is the general number laid, of a greyish or buffish-white colour, spotted with reddish-brown; they are very

similar to its near relatives the Pied and Blue-headed Wagtails' egg, but may easily be distinguished by the Parent Birds, and the position in which they are placed. Time: April, May, June, and early in July.

Countryside Notes. By the side of gravel-bottomed rivers, mountain streams, and disused canals, you may meet this charming bird which is the longest of the Wagtail family, and to my mind, the most graceful and charming. I have met him again and again, in Warwick, Northants, Oxford, Gloucestershire, and Wilts, being particularly plentiful on the Thames and Severn canal in the neighbourhood of Brimscombe, a suburb of Stroud; here, I believe, a great number breed, although, I have only found the nest on three occasions in this neighbourhood, but have seen a great number of young in the vicinity of bridges and locks, and round the overflow pools and ditches, and here it is that they seem to live the whole of their lives, and I firmly believe that few people are aware such a handsome bird exists as this, being as he is, symmetrical in shape, and of most delicate colourings, and whose tail seems almost as if it were on a spring, for whenever the bird moves, its tail is in one constant vibration, far more so than any other of the Wagtails or Pipits, and right well does he deserve the honour of being the handsomest of a handsome family.

Catching. I find that this may be accomplished best by placing your nets across some shallow stream, where these birds feed, and with a call bird close at hand, but

not in the net, or the sight of the cage will frighten this nervous bird. I have placed it some ten yards away on the ground and partly covered the cage with grass, or herbage, and you will find that if your bird will call, and the Wagtails you require, frequent the spot where your nets are laid, they will drop there, without hesitation.

If they have got very wet, place the store cage in the sun and they will soon dry. Bye the bye, I may here mention that I am an advocate of a gauze-fronted store cage for catching purposes,

Meteing off and Steadying. I cannot recommend you to a better system, than that which I have adopted, in the case of the Yellow Wagtail.

General Feeding. This, too, if carried out as recommended in the case of the Yellow, should prove successful.

Hand Rearing. The same applies here also, as in the case of the Yellow.

Exhibiting. In the Grey Wagtail, you have one of the most charming and dainty birds you could desire for an exhibition purpose if your bird is of good colour, quality of feather, and carriage, you may rest assured that he will meet with success in many a hard fought battle for supremacy.

The one I have in my possession now, is one of the best I believe that has ever been exhibited, although some two years ago I was fortunate in being the posses-

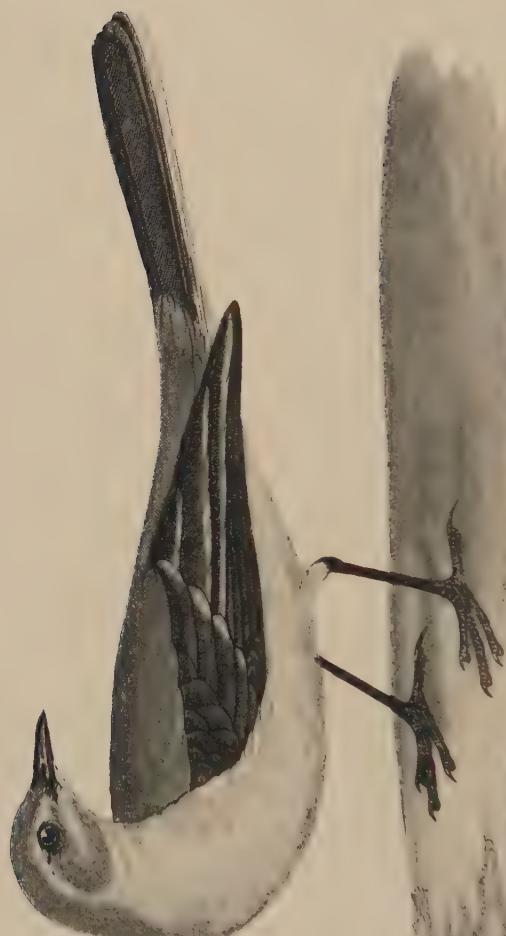
sor of one nearly its equal, which unfortunately died, of old age, for it had stood about six years in confinement, and had won a great number of premier honours on the bench.

In selecting an exhibition specimen, good colour of chest and back is a great necessity; tail must in no ways be frayed at end; the eye streak and general markings on wings must be distinct, and free from black or grey; and with all, good carriage and steadiness, are two points of utmost importance.

Attractive Qualities. The Grey Wagtail is brimful of them. He is a charming cage bird, and a sweet singer. He is unsurpassed by any of his feathered brethren, either in his wild state or in confinement. His stately walk, his wagging tail, his waistcoat of the richest yellow, all have helped to make the Grey Wagtail the great favourite he is to-day, and if well cared for, he will charm you in the Spring with his sweet song, as he struts from perch to perch, never seeming to tire of his efforts to please you.

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla raii (Bonaparte).



YELLOW WAGTAIL

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six and a half inches; crown of head, neck, back, and scapulars, light olive green; wing coverts olive brown, tipped with light yellow; primaries dusky-brown; upper tail coverts olive green; inner tail quills black; outer tail quills black and white; over eye and ears yellow stripe; chin, throat, breast, and the whole of under parts bright yellow.

Female is similar to the male, but much less bright in colour.

Habitation. Generally found throughout England, except in the South-western Counties of Devon and Cornwall, the South of Scotland, but far more scarce in Ireland.

Being a ground bird, it is generally found in meadows and pasture lands, particularly where cattle are daily turned out to graze.

Nest and Eggs. The nest, which is generally placed on the ground under a tuft of grass or gorse, consists of dried grass, roots and moss with lining of feather or hair, contains five eggs, of a greyish-white colour, spotted and streaked with various shades of reddish-brown, particularly on the larger end. Time: June, and July. Sometimes as late as August.

Countryside Notes. When the bleak March winds are over and the genial sunshine of April pours forth its radiancy, it is then on hearing the *Tzee, Tzee*, of the Yellow Wagtail flying overhead that we are convinced the Spring is here. I have often watched him travel for a great distance through the binoculars, and once he catches sight of a herd of cattle, he darts downward, probably called by another of his brethren, for it is no rare occurrence to see thirty or forty of these beautiful birds running along the ground in search of insects, that the cattle attract. It is almost wonderful that he does not get trod on for he seems to see no danger, however close he may make his path to the heavy laden hoofs of cattle or horses. I think a flock of these sweet birds, on a warm May day when the sun is shining on them is one of the prettiest sights of ornithology, for they run here and there with such stateliness (particularly the cocks with their bright yellow breast) as if they seemed thankful to be back in this fair Country again.

The banks of the Avon, Thames, Severn and Wye, seems to be greatly favoured by this bird, probably owing to them being in a southerly direction, and the quantity of cattle that are grazed there.

As the month of August comes to an end, they once more migrate to warmer climes with their broods, waiting for Spring to return again.

Catching. Generally speaking, there is no better way for the snaring of this bird than by means of a pair of clap nets, and a call bird of the same variety, placed in a ground where cattle are grazing. Care must be taken

that the latter do not tread in your nets, or the havoc they will play will mean the acquiring of a new pair of nets.

Meteing off and Steadying. Place in gauze-fronted cage, about two feet long, and one foot wide, put four perches right across the bed about two inches from the bottom, and two inches apart. Line the drawer with sawdust, provide fresh water daily and feed exactly as recommended for the Nightingale. On this treatment, with the addition of a few live flies, you will find your bird do well, and soon be reconciled to confinement.

General Feeding. I cannot recommend you a better general food than that mentioned for the Nightingale, but it would be as well to include a few more live insects perhaps, as this bird I find is hardly so easy to keep in exhibition trim as the former, being subject to go in decline if not most liberally treated.

Hand Rearing. I cannot conscientiously recommend this being adopted with any of the Wagtail family, for two reasons, firstly, for the fact that if they are caught as adult they are most easily tamed with care, and secondly, unless anyone has unlimited time on their hands, they are birds that get in a very wretched condition when being hand fed, and need a great deal of cleaning, and almost endless attention. Of course, should you desire to carry out this task I would refer you to the directions recommended in the case of the Nightingale, with a few house flies per diem in addition

They should succeed if, as I before stated, you have unlimited time on hand.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird he is hard to beat, particularly if well staged and of good colour, which is greatly enhanced with a little colour food.

When selecting an exhibition specimen, get one of the brightest possible shade on chest and belly, back of good even colour, and eye streak clean cut, and as bright as possible. Of course steadiness is a great virtue in all birds, but it is particularly so in the case of the Wagtail and Pipit family, for if nice and steady they show off the movement of the tail to perfection, and look far more graceful than rushing about.

Attractive Qualities. As aviary and exhibition birds the whole of the Wagtail family make most charming pets, and although the yellow one has not such a sweet song as the grey, he is none the less attractive and fascinating. If kept in a roomy cage, and supplied with a bath occasionally, he will keep his garb in splendid trim, and always look neat and smart.

Pied Wagtail

Motacilla lugubris (Temminck).



PIED WAGTAIL

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length seven and a half inches, about half of which belongs to the tail; forehead, sides of head, and part of neck white; crown of head, other portion of neck, back and upper tail coverts black; wing coverts black edged with white; primaries black edged with white; tail black, except the two outer feathers which are white; throat and sides black; breast, belly, and underparts white.

Female: Dirty grey on the back, and smaller in size than the male.

Habitation. Found generally plentiful throughout the British Isles, particularly in boggy and marshy swamps, in the neighbourhood of pools, lakes and streams, particularly the former.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is generally placed in ivy climbing to walls and bridges, holes in stone walls, and in ledges of rock. It is similar to that of the Grey Wagtail, being composed of dried grass, roots and moss, with lining of feathers, hair, or wool. Four or five eggs are laid, of a greyish-white spotted with light brown, particularly on the larger end. Time: May, June, and July.

Countryside Notes. Go when you may in the country, particularly in the neighbourhood of farms, where a good old duck-pond exists, and you will be

almost sure to find a party of Pied Wagtails in possession, and a pretty sight it is to see them running along the side of the pool in pursuit of flies and other insects on which they exist.

He is very partial to a stump or rail, that may be in or near the water, and on this many hours are spent, darting here and there, as his quarry goes past him.

On the side of one pond, I found a nest in some ivy with five young, and it seems almost miraculous, how soon they were flown and along with their parents enjoying the fun, but with all their youthful beauty, they had not the lustre and general dense colouring that adorns the adult.

Commonly called the Water Wagtail, I think it is known to almost every boy. In fact it was one of the first birds of the Countryside I made my acquaintance with.

Catching. Generally speaking this bird is not sought after a great deal, although numbers are caught every year in the nets when set for other birds, but I think I am not far wrong in saying that very few catchers take the trouble to box them, as there is little or no sale, owing to their not being sufficiently rare for exhibition, and perhaps a little unpopular as a cage bird.

Meteing off, Steadying, and General Feeding. Should you desire to keep this bird in confinement, you cannot do better than treat as recommended in the case of the Yellow.

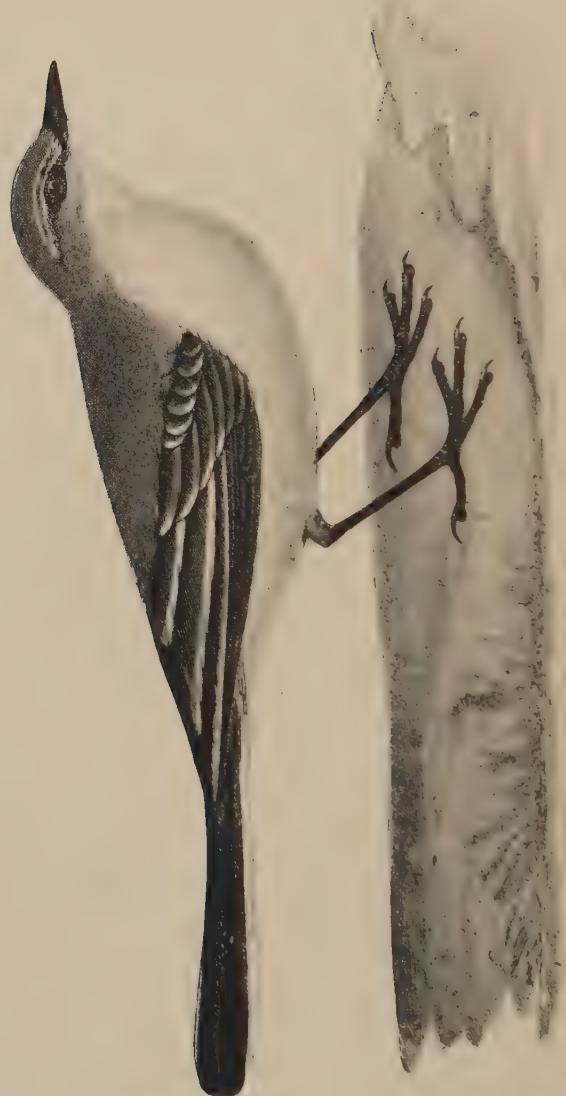
Hand Rearing. This bird is not worth the trouble of hand rearing.

Exhibition. This bird, although beautiful to look upon, is rarely seen on the show bench, probably owing to the fact, that it stands no chance with other rarer birds, so I think it is unnecessary to deal with it from an exhibition point of view.

Attractive Qualities. The whole of the attraction that adorns this bird is in his wild life around some pond or marshy bed, where on a fine day, you can see him in all his glory, flying from place to place, uttering his peculiar cry of "*chiz-zat, chiz-zit,*" which seems to be about the whole of his singing vocabulary.

Blueheaded Wagtail

Motacilla flava (Linnæus).



BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL

Description of Parent Birds. Male : Length about six and a half inches; crown of head and neck bluish-grey; scapulars, back, and upper tail coverts yellowish olive-green; wing coverts and primary flights dull black, the former are edged with greenish-yellow; tail black bordered with white; over and under the eye a pale yellow line; cheeks white; throat, breast, belly, and underparts bright yellow.

The female is far less brilliant in colour than the male and slightly smaller.

Habitation. Generally speaking, the Blue-headed Wagtail is a Continental bird, and is rarely seen in these Islands, although it has been recorded in Northumberland and Essex, and other places on very rare occasions, but perhaps owing to its great likeness to the Yellow Wagtail, it may have been mistaken for that variety.

Nest and Eggs. On the ground, amongst tufts of grass and banks, is the general position of its nest, which is composed of dried grass, moss, and roots, lined with hair or wool. Five eggs are laid of a greyish-white, spotted and mottled with shades of brown, very similar indeed to those of the Yellow variety. Time : May and June.

Countryside Notes. Like its near relative the Yellow variety, the Blue-headed Wagtail is only a migrant to

these Islands, and very rare at that. Personally, I have never seen a specimen in its wild haunts, but I think there can be no doubt that it associates greatly with the Yellow, and follows practically the same mode of living, viz., on grass tracks, particularly where grazing cattle are to be found, where it feeds on the myriads of flies that attack these animals in the warm days of Spring, Summer, and early Autumn.

Its call note is practically the same as the Yellow, at least, such has been the case with those have had in my possession from time to time.

Catching. As this bird is rarely seen here, I cannot give any practical information on this point, but I should think that it would be taken in company with the Yellow, and in the same way.

Meteing off and Steadying. If you ever have the good fortune to get one fresh caught, you cannot do better I think than adopt the method recommended for the Yellow, but the greater part that are seen on the show bench in England are Continental specimens, that have been imported here.

General Feeding. The same method as that recommended for the Yellow will answer admirably. I kept one in perfect health for two years on this diet, and when I sold it, it was in perfect feather and condition.

Hand Rearing. This, of course, could be accomplished the same as in the case of the Yellow, but you

have to find the nest first, which I think will not be done this side of the English Channel.

Exhibiting. Of late years the Blue-headed Wagtail has come prominently to the front on the exhibition bench, and although perhaps not so stately as the Grey variety, there is no disputing the fact he is a most handsome exhibit. I have only had two in my time, but I have been most successful with them, winning premier honour at many large shows.

An exhibition specimen should be as large as possible, colour on chest, and the streaks round the eye should be nicely cut and free from other colouration.

One word of warning here would be beneficial, viz., the colour feeding of this bird must be proceeded with in great caution, for in securing a richly coloured chest, you are apt to spoil the blue on the crown of the head, as the pepper, if served very hot, will turn the cap green; hence your bird, properly speaking, loses the appendage from which he obtains his name.

Attractive Qualities. Like the Grey Wagtail, he has many good qualities, and when once kept, becomes a general favourite. Although possessing no song, his brilliant plumage is a great attraction to any bird room. say nothing of the very docile nature of this sweet bird. One that I had would run down my arm, and take a mealworm from my fingers, and was allowed to run all about the bird house, and would always return to his proper cage to roost.

White Wagtail

Motacilla alba (Linnæus).



WHITE WAGTAIL

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about seven and three-quarter inches; crown of head, neck, back, and upper tail coverts ash grey; wings brownish-grey; tail black with the exception of the two centre quills, and the two outside ditto, which are partly white; cheeks white; throat and upper breast black; lower breast, belly and under tail coverts white.

The female is not so clear in colouration, and is not so stately as the male.

Habitation. Similar to that of the Pied variety, but seldom seen in any part of England with the exception of the Southern Counties, it being, generally speaking, a continental bird and rarely visits this country.

Nest and Eggs. The former is generally placed in a similar position to that occupied by the Pied variety, and is composed of practically the same kinds of material.

The eggs, which number five to six in a nest, are of a greyish colour, spotted and streaked with brown and darker grey. Time: April, May and June.

Countryside Notes. Being so much like its brother the Pied Wagtail, it is often taken by an inexperienced eye for that variety, and even Catchers of long experience I have known to pass a male of this variety for that of a hen of the Pied variety. I have met with it on two occasions in south Gloucestershire, and have also seen it in Hampshire and Kent, but only in solitary pairs.

As to its movements they are practically the same as the Pied, and the call note too is very similar to that variety.

Catching. The mode of taking would be the same as the Pied.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. Proceed exactly as set out in the case of the other Wagtails, and good results should follow.

Hand Rearing. If opportunity comes your way treat as the Yellow.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition bird I am rather fond of the White Wagtail, for I have won many honours with a very fine specimen I had some two years ago. Of course I do not suggest he would beat the Grey, or Blue-headed, but if these are not competing in the same class, and your bird is in good feather, it is pretty sure to be in the money. An exhibition specimen should be as snaky as possible, not too bold in the chest, but good proportionate size, and good carriage. All markings should be evenly cut, particularly round the head and chest, the white being of the purest colour, and the black free from bronziness or grey.

Attractive Qualities. As a cage bird the White Wagtail has found many friends, and some fine specimens have lately been kept in confinement. In fact the last two years they have been imported from the Continent in fairly large numbers. He has a very short, but not unpleasant song, and is generally looked up to as an aviary or exhibition bird rather than a household pet.

Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis (Linnæus).



TREE PIPIT

Description of Parent Birds. Male: Length about six and a half inches; crown, neck and back dark brown; the feathers edged with a lighter shade; wings dark brown; lesser coverts edged with buffish-white; greater coverts edged with light brown; rump, upper tail coverts and quills middle brown, with the exception of the two outer ones, which are white; throat buffish white; a pale brown streak exists from the gape slightly turned upwards, and then downward; breast buffish white, spotted with dark brown, spots similar to a Thrush; belly and underparts dirty white.

The female is not so rich in body-colour as the male. The breast markings are not so distinct, and she is a little smaller in size.

Habitation. This bird is a Summer migrant in these Islands, generally arriving in April and leaving in September. It is not at all local in its habits, but is pretty generally distributed throughout the country, where well-wooded and cultivated districts abound.

Nest and Eggs. The nest is often placed under the shelter of an over-hanging stone, tuft of grass, or on a bank. I find it is particularly fond of railway embankments, and I have often found its nest there. It is composed of dried grass and stems with inner lining of finer grass and hair.

The eggs, which are generally five in number, are of a greyish-ground colour, slightly tinged with an olive brown, evenly spotted with reddish-brown spots and markings of grey. Time: end of April, May, June and July.

Countryside Notes. As the warm and ever welcome sunshine of April brings the trees into tender leaf, this sweet little Pipit makes his sojourn here after his long and trying flight from Africa or India. I am always glad to hear his ringing little song, as he soars aloft from some dead branch of an oak or beach tree, rising some twenty feet in the air, and gradually flitting down similar to a Skylark into the grass, or below, in search of insects on which it lives.

I know there are a great many who do not know this bird, for even experienced catchers assert they have never seen it, but of course this is a delusion, for they have not been able to distinguish it from its near relative, the Meadow Pipit.

Personally, I know no sweeter Countryside bird than this, and he is one of the first after the arrival of the Chiff-Chaff that we expect to see.

Catching. This may be accomplished with either nets or lime. I am in favour of the former, for it is far less shock to the system of the captive, and does not mutilate the plumage. It is often caught in company with other birds in August and early in September, and is eagerly sought after by all ornithologists.

Meteing off, Steadying and General Feeding. Like the Wagtail family the Tree Pipit is not difficult to get used to confinement if kindly treated and well catered for.

I cannot do better than recommend you to the directions of feeding and treating Wagtails, for these are, I believe, the connecting link between the Wagtail and Lark. It will be well perhaps to throw a little grass seed and common rape in the cage, as I have found some Pipits are rather partial to it, while others will not eat it.

Hand Rearing. Carry out directions mentioned for Nightingale, and you will find your charges thrive: I have reared several nests of Pipits in this way.

Exhibiting. As an exhibition species, the Tree Pipit is equal to any variety I know. In fact, if in fine condition of feather and of good ground colour and carriage, but for his sombre coloured dress, I consider him equal to his cousin, the Grey Wagtail, and many hard fought victories I have seen won with these two varieties alternately, one judge deciding on the Wagtail, and another on the Pipit.

Some most excellent examples have been put down at the Palace and other large shows this last few years, and they have always been to the front whatever may be competing against them.

In selecting an exhibition Tree Pipit, size of course is of great importance. See that the markings on head and wings are distinct, and free from being blurred. The

spots on the chest should be evenly distributed, and the general carriage of the bird as stately as possible.

Attractive Qualities. There's no mistaking the fact that when this gem of a bird has found his way into a fancier's bird room, he is never out of it, if he can procure one worthy of its race, for not only is he a most docile little chap, and has a sweet little song of his own, but above all, although of such sombre dress, he is loved by all who come in contact with him, and know his little ways, therefore he is one I can honestly recommend for cage or aviary life, providing of course, that the latter is closed in and heated during the cold, bleak days of Winter and free access to bathe in the Summer.

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